

MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS
OF THE U.S.S.R.

DOCUMENTS
AND MATERIALS
RELATING
TO THE EVE
of the
SECOND WORLD WAR

Volume



DIRKSEN PAPERS
(1938-1939)

DOCUMENTS AND MATERIALS RELATING
TO THE EVE OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR

VOLUME

II

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PREFACE

Among the German documents and records captured by the Soviet Army were the papers of Herbert von Dirksen, former German Ambassador to Moscow, Tokyo and London. They were found on his estate at Gröditzberg.

The Dirksen papers for the most part represent the private and business correspondence and records of a landowner, and only to a lesser extent those of a diplomat. The latter consist:

Firstly, of typewritten copies of Dirksen's official telegrams, letters and reports he had made for himself, usually bearing the notation: "For the Ambassador" (für Herrn Botschafter).

Secondly, of official and private letters received by Dirksen from the German Foreign Office and from German diplomatists. These are in the original, are signed by their authors, and in the majority of cases are written on official or personal letterheads. They are heavily underscored in coloured pencil and sometimes bear marginal notes in Dirksen's hand.

The copies of Dirksen's telegrams, reports and letters are either initialled by him or have a typewritten subscription—"Signed: von Dirksen" (gez. von Dirksen).¹

¹ In a few cases, when the documents of this category do not bear a signature, and their authorship has been established from

Dirksen's correspondence relating to the period of his ambassadorship in London is more or less fully represented in his papers, although here too there are certain lacunae. The correspondence discovered in Dirksen's papers relating to earlier periods of his activity are of a fragmentary character.

The originals from which the documents of the Dirksen papers are published fall into the following categories:

1. Typewritten copies of telegrams, reports and letters sent by Dirksen to the German Foreign Office.
2. Typewritten copies of decoded telegrams to Dirksen from the Foreign Office.
3. Originals of official letters of instruction or information sent to Dirksen by leading officials of the Foreign Office or members of the staff of the London Embassy.
4. Originals of unofficial letters to Dirksen from leading officials of the Foreign Office.
5. Originals of private letters to Dirksen from colleagues or political friends.
6. Copies of private letters from Dirksen to colleagues or political friends.
7. Minutes of Dirksen's conversations with foreign diplomatists and public men.
8. Memoranda compiled by Dirksen for the Foreign Office.

With the exception of documents Nos. 1 and 2 which are reproductions of English originals, all the documents published are translated from the German. The documents are arranged in chronological order.

Underscorings in the text of the originals are reproduced only when they are made by their authors, and not by their

documents addressed to Dirksen to which they are found to be his replies, or from their contents, Dirksen's signature is given in the published text in square brackets.

recipient, Dirksen. The numerous underscorings made by the recipient are as a rule omitted, as are also pencil notations which are of no interest.

Footnotes to the documents are in all cases by the editor of the publication.

In appendices to the volume are published: documents from Dirksen's unofficial correspondence (Appendix I) and two letters from the German Ambassador to Paris, Welczek (Appendix II).

This collection was prepared for the press by the Archives Department of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the U.S.S.R.

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No. 1
**LETTER FROM EDITOR
OF "THE DAILY MAIL" CRANFIELD
TO GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON
DIRKSEN¹**

THE DAILY MAIL,
London²

*Northcliffe House, E. C. 4.
May 5th, 1938³*

Your Excellency,

I enclose herewith a proof of an article which will be appearing in "The Daily Mail" tomorrow, Friday.

Yours faithfully,

A. L. Cranfield⁴

Editor

His Excellency Dr. Dirksen.⁵

¹ Original in English.

² Letterhead.

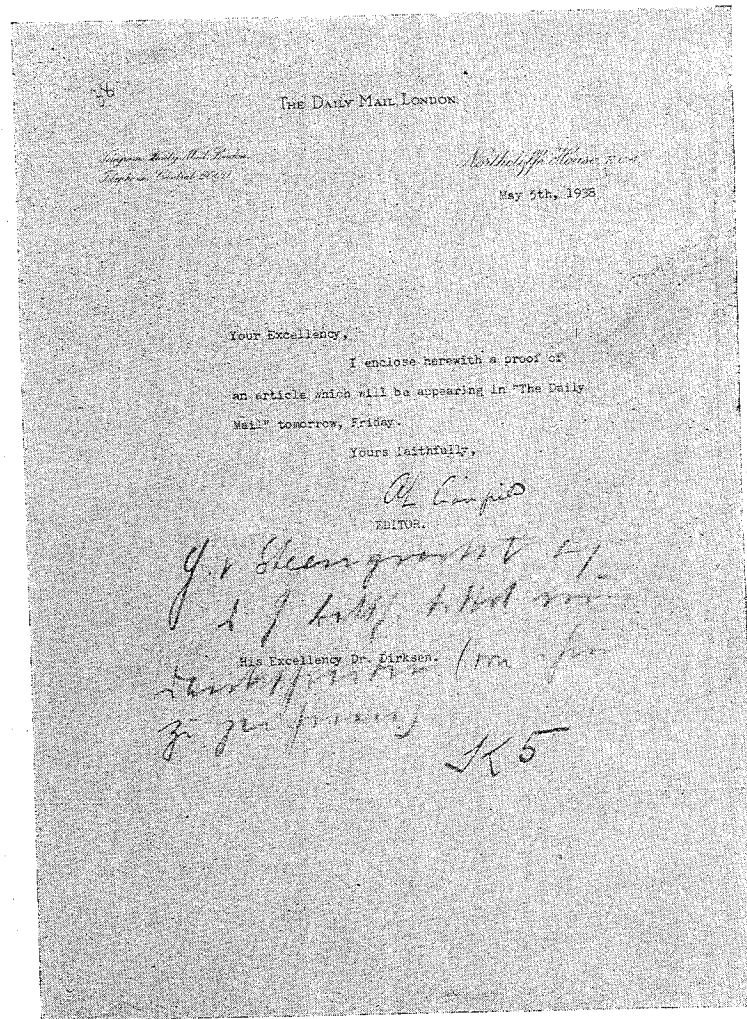
³ On the left side of the letterhead are given the telegraphic address and telephone number of "The Daily Mail."

⁴ Signed by Cranfield personally.

⁵ To the letter is attached a proof of an article by Rothermere, "Some More Postscripts by Viscount Rothermere." Under the caption,

"Czechs Not Our Business," the article in part says: "Czecho-Slovakia is not of the remotest concern to us. If France likes to burn her fingers there, that is a matter for France, although such a policy is meeting with increasing opposition in France from newspapers and public men. Indeed, the "Eclaireur de Nice"—one of the three best-known French provincial newspapers—declared only a few days ago that 'the bones of a small French soldier are worth more than all the Czecho-Slovaks in the world.' The State of Czecho-Slovakia, which was created by those short-sighted treaties of eighteen years ago, has behaved from the first not only oppressively towards her minorities, but eccentrically."

Then come various accusations against Czechoslovakia and a quotation from an old article by Rothermere which appeared in the same newspaper on September 24, 1930, and in which he said that "a powerful, highly patriotic people like the Germans will never be satisfied to leave the attainment of their national ambitions to the League of Nations' mercy. It is more likely that when a National-Socialist Government arrives in power, Germany, under that Party's vigorous leadership, will herself show the way to the immediate redress of the most flagrant injustices. . . . As a result of such developments, Czecho-Slovakia, which has so systematically violated the Peace Treaty, both by its oppression of racial minorities and its failure to reduce its own armaments, might be elbowed out of existence overnight," etc.



Photostatic copy of Document No. 1

No. 2

**LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO EDITOR
OF "THE DAILY MAIL" CRANFIELD¹**

Copy.

6th May, 1938

A. L. Cranfield, Esq.,
Editor of "The Daily Mail,"
Northcliffe House,
London E. C. 4.

Dear Mr. Cranfield,

I want to thank you very sincerely for your kindness in having sent me before printing the "Postscripts" by Viscount Rothermere.

This Courtesy has been highly appreciated.

Yours sincerely,

Signed: *von Dirksen*

¹ Original in English.

No. 3

LETTER FROM UNDER SECRETARY
OF STATE IN THE GERMAN
FOREIGN OFFICE WOERMANN
TO GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN

Foreign Office¹

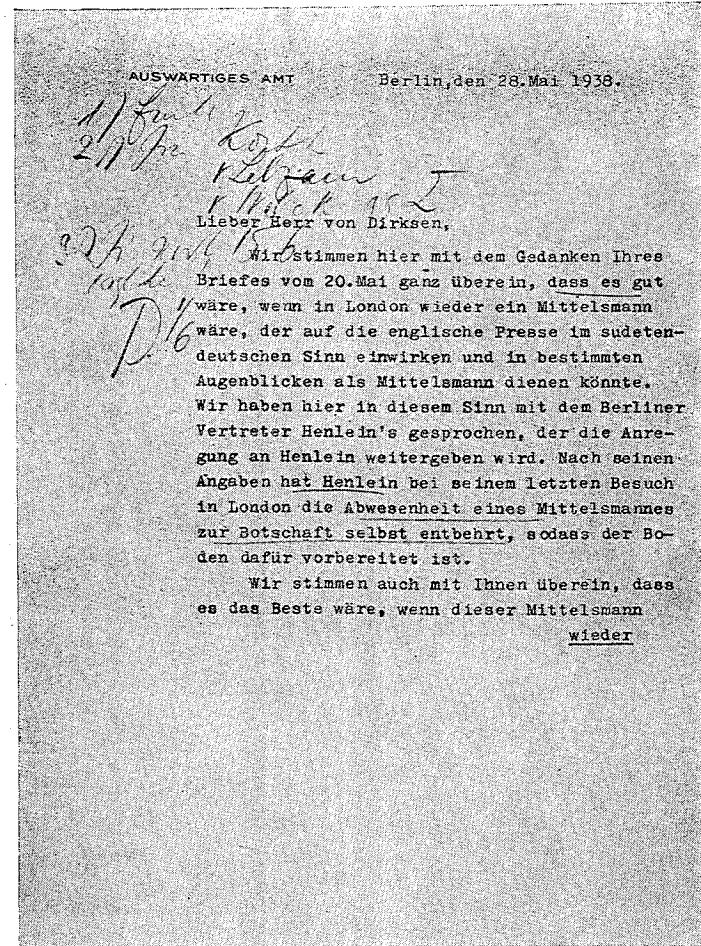
Berlin, May 28, 1938

Dear Herr von Dirksen,

We here fully agree with the suggestion contained in your letter of May 20 that it would be a good thing if there were again an intermediary in London who could influence the British press in the Sudeten German direction and at definite moments could serve as an intermediary. We have discussed the matter with Henlein's Berlin representative, who will pass on the suggestion to Henlein. According to him, Henlein himself, when he was last in London, felt the lack of an intermediary at the Embassy, so that the ground is already prepared.

We also agree with you that it would be best if this intermediary again figured as a correspondent of the "Zeit."

¹ Letterhead of the German Foreign Office.



Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 3

-2-

wieder als Korrespondent der "Zeit" figurieren würde.

Ich würde Ihnen dankbar sein, wenn Sie mir eine Mitteilung machen würden, sobald ein solcher Vertreter dort eingetroffen ist, vielleicht aber auch dann, wenn Ihrer Anregung in absehbarer Zeit nicht entsprochen worden ist; in diesem Fall würden wir nochmals vorstossen.

Mit herzlichen Grüßen und
Heil Hitler!
stets Ihr

W. W. W.

I should be grateful if you would inform me immediately such a representative arrives in London, and perhaps also if your suggestion is not acted upon within a reasonable time, in which case we shall push the matter again.

With cordial greetings and

Heil Hitler!

Always yours,

*Woermann*¹

¹ Signed by Woermann personally.

No. 4

**REPORT OF THE GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN
TO THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS**

London, July 10, 1938

FO, Berlin

Supplementary to Report

[Copy]

Secret

A. No. 2589, of June 10, 1938

POLITICAL REPORT¹

Re: Present State of German-English
Relations

I. There has scarcely been another instance in the history of Anglo-German relations when they have in so short a time been so thoroughly discussed—I would almost say: upset—in their totality as in the past three months. The political relations were put to a severe test by the Austrian Anschluss and the Czechoslovak crisis; the problem of Austria's debts raised the question of the economic and financial relations of the two countries; England's denunciation of the passport agreement threatened passenger traffic and, hence, the possibility of a proper rapprochement; the British Government's military and economic war

¹ The original bears an inscription in red pencil: "From Ambassador von Dirksen. 18.8."

preparations—especially the organization of air defence—raised in the minds of the population the spectre of an impending war; the reincorporation of Austria and the "Nie-möller affair" reawakened half-forgotten agitational complexes, such as the Jewish question and the Church question. The foundations on which Anglo-German relations were erected tottered; they were threatened by blows from without—for the first time since the end of the world war, it was not a German-French, but a German-English conflict (it goes without saying, with the participation of France, Czechoslovakia, etc.) which came under the lurid limelight of the world press. These peace-menacing developments took their course notwithstanding the fact that Germany, even on the admission of her enemies, had not committed any act that might constitute a threat to peace, and notwithstanding the fact that in England the Chamberlain-Halifax Cabinet is at the helm and the first and most essential plank of its platform was and is agreement with the totalitarian States.

Hence it is an urgent necessity to analyze the causes that have called forth these developments and to find the means of eliminating this menacing state of affairs.

II. The chief reasons for the developments which are driving toward a crisis in German-English relations are, in my opinion, the following:

1) *The three driving forces that are anxious to unleash a war by a world coalition against Germany*¹ in order to destroy her before she has fully established her position as a World Power—Jewry, the Communist International and the nationalist groups in the individual countries—have not for a long time been so persistently and feverishly active as in these past months. After a series of vain attempts

¹ Underscored in the original.

to unleash a world war—such as the bombing of the cruiser *Leipzig*, the spread of sensational rumours regarding German intentions in Morocco, the attempt of the second Blum Cabinet in March of this year to employ French regular divisions in Spain—these same forces renewed the attempt to set a world coalition against Germany by staging the Czech week-end crisis. This action was prepared, accompanied and, after the failure of the conspiracy, continued by a campaign in the press, for which the revival of the Jewish question in Austria and the Church conflict in Germany were to furnish the fuel.

2) These sinister machinations found fertile soil in British public opinion all the more since the *Austrian Anschluss*¹ had shocked the political conscience of the Britons. The old catchwords about the right of existence of small nations, democracy, the League of Nations, the mailed fist of militarism were revived, and profoundly agitated and disturbed the average Englishman who readily responds to every appeal to his sentimentality. Of far greater importance still was the fact that the politically-minded Englishman imagined that he had been tactically outwitted and that his power on the continent was threatened. Together with the purely human reaction, "not to be fooled again," the political determination was strengthened to oppose, even at the cost of war, any further attempts to change the balance of power on the continent without a preliminary understanding with England. This determination was for the first time openly expressed during the Czech crisis.

3) To this general attitude of English public opinion was added the state of mind which, in a democratic country, is inseparably associated with rearmament. If opposition

¹ Underscored in the original.

was to be removed the credits for armament obtained, and the necessary number of volunteers for the army and air defence secured, the people had to be roused. To achieve this, it was not enough to persuade the public that there was a theoretical danger of war; it had to be demonstrated that there was a threat from a concrete enemy. All these considerations and tendencies resulted in the creation of an atmosphere which engendered a neurotic fear of a possible attack by a possible enemy. And this possible enemy could only be Germany..

4) These developments were accelerated by the fact that the *whole complex of German-English relations was being more and more drawn into the vortex of British domestic politics*.¹ By making his major aim the achievement of an adjustment with the authoritarian States independently of the League of Nations, and using this cry to get rid of Eden, Chamberlain—after the conclusion of the Italo-English treaty—gave his opponents the opportunity to select the German-English adjustment, or, rather, its impossibility, as the chief and nearest target for attack. For the non-eventuation of this adjustment would reduce Chamberlain's major thesis to an absurdity. Consequently, the attacks of the British press on the alleged rape of Austria and on Germany's intention to annex Czechia at the same time brought grist to the mill of Chamberlain's foes.

These foes chose German-English relations as a target for direct and indirect attack also from the following considerations of domestic political tactics: the parliamentary opposition—the Labour Party and the Liberals—as a result of a rather complicated evolution, were led to select as the ground for their attacks, not domestic, but foreign policy.

¹ Underscored in the original.

Here Germany was an object all ready at hand on which they could vent their hatred of authoritarian state leadership. The same, if for quite different reasons, is true of Chamberlain's enemies within his own party: Eden and the Churchill group. Eden and his followers, because they believe that the authoritarian States can be curbed only by direct threat of war, are following the leading strings of the parliamentary opposition. Churchill, together with his followers, believes that the easiest way to overthrow Chamberlain and put himself in the saddle is to accuse the Cabinet of dilatoriness in building sound defences against possible attack—on the part of Germany, of course. It goes without saying that it is presumed that this attack will come from the air—regarding the threat of which the average Englishman is just now as sensitive as he was regarding the "German Luxusflotte" before the war. Chamberlain had therefore to save himself from the attacks of the opposition by kicking out his Air Ministers, Winterton and Swinton; hence, too, the attack of Member of Parliament Sandys in connection with the insufficiency of anti-aircraft guns. The effect of all these manoeuvres, which for the most part are prompted by purely domestic political considerations, is that the average Englishman pictures Germany as the probable enemy, and one who will perhaps have to be fought soon.

The result of this internal and external development of German-English relations is that the relations between the two countries are in a state of complete uncertainty. The attempts to effect an adjustment made in the talks held from the autumn of 1937 to 1938 were interrupted owing to Chamberlain's declaration on March 23 of this year in connection with the Austrian Anschluss. Of the two pillars on which, even in critical times, the shaky edifice of foreign relations rested—the economic treaty and the

naval limitation agreement—the economic treaty was shaken by the question of Austria's debts; the new agreement, however, was made effective, and it has had a favourable indirect general influence. The naval agreement is liable to alteration owing to the development of the naval armament policy of the Great Powers; its political value has been undermined by the consciousness that has been spreading in England in the past few years, and especially in the past few months, that the most dangerous threat to England's security is now, not the navy of an eventual enemy, but the air force. No long arguments are needed to demonstrate that a general regulation of German-English relations must be striven for, if developments fraught with a serious danger of war are to be averted.

III. The premises for the possibility of a general settlement of the problems which divide the two countries are indicated in the following questions:

1) Have the developments of these past months diminished or destroyed the readiness of the Chamberlain Cabinet to seek an adjustment with Germany?

2) Is the Chamberlain Cabinet strong enough to carry through a policy of adjustment?

In reference to the first question. The shock of the Austrian Anschluss caused the reaction with which we are familiar, but it was comparatively quickly overcome. The blunders of British foreign policy during the Czech week-end crisis were soon recognized as such, and steps were taken to remedy them by acknowledging the loyalty demonstrated by Germany, by remaining silent in face of the vigorous attacks of the German press, by a speech by Halifax friendly to Germany in the House of Lords, by his speech before the Royal Institute of International Affairs containing a broad recognition of the German standpoint,

by Chamberlain's speech in Kettering, and by Halifax's statements to the press on July 11.¹

All these pronouncements on the part of responsible British statesmen, which were emphasized and interpreted in conversations with me, are evidence that the desire for agreement with Germany stands—with a growing tendency, however, to let Germany take the initiative for the resumption of the negotiations. In point of time, this readiness coincides with a certain clarification of the Czechoslovak question.

There is a wish in London to remove this question, as a breeding ground of a new world war, from the immediate field of danger, if only through a temporary and tentative agreement between the Sudeten Germans and the Czechoslovak Government, before entering on so far-reaching a new political undertaking as an attempt at an adjustment with Germany.

In reference to the second question. The Chamberlain Cabinet has in these past months been the object of a growingly fierce attack on the part of its opponents, without its having any correspondingly conspicuous achievements to show. The only big achievement, the settlement with Ireland, is totally ignored. The Anglo-Italian treaty has not yet entered into force, since the stipulations relative to the developments in Spain have not been carried out. The acceptance of the coming plan² likewise cannot be represented as an achievement, since its execution is dubious and at the best will take several months. Relations with Germany, which is being increasingly suspected and abused by the opposition and the press, have been subjected to

¹ So in the original.

² The plan to eliminate foreign volunteers from the Republican army and so-called "volunteers" from Franco's army.

strain, so that still less could there be any question of adjustment. Chamberlain's foreign policy program of agreement with the totalitarian States has in no case been fully successful—at best it has promissory notes of dubious negotiability to its credit. On the other hand, the Cabinet has sustained painful wounds from the attacks of the opposition: Air Ministers Winterton and Swinton had to be thrown overboard in order to absolve the Cabinet of the charge of displaying insufficient energy in air armament; the Sandys-Hore Belisha conflict over the violation of military secrecy, or parliamentary privileges, is at present at best a draw; Chamberlain's statements regarding England's agricultural potentialities and limitations have incurred the rancour of the British farmers, who represent the core of the Conservative vote. However, in spite of all these attacks, it is unlikely that the Cabinet will be in serious danger before the summer recess. The vacation months, if there are no dangerous developments in foreign policy, will have an assuaging effect. The confidence in Chamberlain's personal integrity and firmness prevalent in wide sections of the electorate will be reinforced by the recognition that there is no man in the opposition equal to him. The desire to reach an adjustment with Germany exists among the broad mass of the British people and is popular.

After a few months of more tranquil developments Chamberlain and Halifax will have the determination, and the assurance from the standpoint of domestic politics, to tackle the last and most important task of British policy: an adjustment with Germany.

IV. To sum up, it may be said:

1) German-English relations, in their totality, are uncertain and extremely strained. They are in need of adjustment—or at least of an attempt at adjustment—

if it is to be avoided that, as was the case before 1914, the conviction gain ground with the British Government (present or future) that the defeat of Germany by a world coalition is essential for the security of the British Empire.

2) The present British Cabinet is the first post-war Cabinet which has made agreement with Germany one of the major points of its program; therefore this government displays with regard to Germany the maximum understanding that could be displayed by any of the likely combinations of British politicians. It possesses the inner-political strength to carry out this task. It has come nearer to understanding the most essential points of the major demands advanced by Germany, with respect to excluding the Soviet Union from the decision of the destinies of Europe, the League of Nations likewise, and the advisability of bilateral negotiations and treaties. It is displaying increasing understanding of Germany's demands in the Sudeten German question. It would be prepared to make great sacrifices to meet Germany's other just demands—on the *one*¹ condition that it is endeavoured to achieve these ends by peaceful means. If Germany should resort to military means to achieve these ends, England would without the slightest doubt go to war on the side of France. The military preparations are sufficiently advanced for this; so are the war-economic preparations; the mental preparation of the English people for such an eventuality, as the last few months have shown, has been completed; the political trial mobilization during the Czech crisis showed that the foreign political deployment² has been effected on a scale at least as great as the world coalition of 1914.

¹ Underscored in the original.

² In the original: "aussenpolitischer Aufmarsch."

3) The attempt to effect an adjustment with England will therefore be the most urgent task of our foreign policy, as soon as suitable conditions will have been created for it in the course of the next few months.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

No. 5

**LETTER FROM THE GERMAN
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON KORDT
TO SECRETARY OF STATE WEIZSÄCKER**

Copy

London, August 23, 1938

Highly Esteemed Herr von Weizsäcker,

You will find inclosed a detailed minute of a conversation which I had today with Chamberlain's most intimate assistant, Sir Horace Wilson.¹ Herr von Dirksen will of course have informed you of the position Sir Horace holds here. Horace Wilson is one of the most influential men in the British Government. He does not like to appear in public. It is known that Neville Chamberlain consults him on everything. Averse to all outward show, he is a man who compels respect from everyone who comes into contact with him. He is an embodiment of Moltke's ideal: "Be more than you seem."

The impression I got from the conversation was that the English realize that the situation in Czechoslovakia cannot continue.² They are undoubtedly also prepared to do everything they can to meet our wishes, although

¹ The minute in question was not found among Dirksen's papers.

² "Die Unhaltbarkeit der Lage in der Tschechoslowakei."

at a price: they want to avoid a military solution, and not for the least reason because they themselves feel that they would have to fight in a thoroughly bad cause. Sir Horace suggested that a specially authorized representative of the British Government might transmit to the Führer a proposal for a peaceful solution on broad lines. But at the same time he said that any effort in this direction would be useless if there were any truth in the rumours circulating in London and on the continent that we had already set a date for the march into Czechoslovakia. I particularly pointed out to Sir Horace how essential it was that the British Government should now speak and act clearly. Beneš and his people must not have the impression that the old policy of tricks and shams can continue owing to the irresolution of Britain.

In accordance with my instructions I did *not*¹ mention a plebiscite in the Sudetenland as a possible solution. But from the whole course of the conversation Wilson cannot have any doubt that we shall not agree to a solution which would leave the State intact in its present form.

Signed: *Th. Kordt*

¹ Underscored in the original.

No. 6

LETTER FROM GERMAN
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON KORDT
TO AMBASSADOR DIRKSEN

GERMAN EMBASSY¹

London, August 29, 1938

Highly Esteemed Mr. Ambassador,

In the course of nearly 48 months' service at the front as company commander in one of the crack infantry regiments of the old army, I have been often and long enough in the foremost positions in Flanders, the Champagne, on the Aisne and the Somme to know that the state of a battle cannot be judged from the purview of a commander of a front unit. But what I am able to gather from the position I at present occupy here, from the firing slits and with trench periscopes, from the reports of outposts and from personal reconnaissance, of the movements and state of preparation in the opposite positions is so significant that I would like to inform you of it.

In the past few weeks, and especially in the past few days, the situation here has become still more acute. Undenied reports regarding the number of reservists called to the colours in Germany, the extremely violent press

¹ Embassy letterhead.

attacks on Czechoslovakia, the rumours that the German Government has set a date for the march into Czechoslovakia—all this, furbished with sometimes worried, sometimes provocative comments in the press—from the Left to the Right—has put an end to the artificially induced tranquillity to which I referred in my letter of the 11th inst. If you take the "Times" as an example, which you of course read, you will be able to judge how much more sharply public opinion reacts today than it did only a little while ago. I inclose herewith yesterday's Sunday article by Garvin in the "Observer," which, in spite of its restrained language, evinces deep concern. You know, however, that Garvin by no means reflects the opinion of the overwhelming majority of the British public. Nevertheless, I am inclined to believe from conversations I have had that he fairly correctly represents the views of Chamberlain's circle.

It is to be inferred from Simon's speech that the British Government still cherishes the illusion that a solution for the Czech problem can be found by way of compromise. True, Sir John Simon is one of the most prominent representatives of that typically British mentality which prefers a bad compromise to a straight solution, if that solution involves the assumption of any responsibility.

All the same, I have reason to presume that the British Government is prepared to meet our wishes as far as is only possible. But to do so, it must know these wishes. The conviction is more and more gaining ground here that we would not be satisfied with the granting of autonomy to the Sudeten Germans, and that we are out for a more far-reaching solution. I have no instructions on this point; I have only a telegraphic instruction from the Under Secretary of State of August 17, according to which we cannot, for various reasons, entertain the idea of a plebiscite.

Tomorrow morning a meeting of the Cabinet will be held, which presumably will be attended by all the Cabinet members except Lord Stanley, who is away in Canada. The press is hazarding the most diverse conjectures as to the decisions which may be adopted at this meeting. The instructions which the Foreign Office gave for the guidance of the press are not very cheering, although whether it is not a bluff is a question I must leave open. The only certain thing is that, with the state of mind as it is at present, the Government will not have much difficulty in persuading the entire British public of the necessity of a war with Germany. The question who will be responsible for the war in the event of such a catastrophe has received considerable attention here for quite some time. It would be senseless to refuse to recognize this fact.

For the rest, I have in my talks guided myself by the viewpoint contained in the instructions of the Reichsminister of August 3 of this year: there must be no doubt in the minds of the British as to the seriousness of the situation.

I realize that these views can convey to you only what is visible here in the frontline. But perhaps my information will at least contribute to a basis for the decisions which must now be taken.¹

I must add one more important observation. For a whole week the attacks on Chamberlain have completely ceased. Among the British public that feeling of solidarity is growing which has always evinced itself at serious moments in English history. I recall 1914, when the Conservatives called off the armed resistance already decided upon to the

¹ Up to this point the letter is typewritten, what follows is written by hand in ink.

Home Rule policy of Asquith's Government, "in order that Britain might be in a position to speak and act with the authority of a united nation" (Curzon in the House of Commons, August 1914).

I must close.

With best greetings and Heil Hitler,

I am,

Yours faithfully,

*Th. Kordt*¹

¹ Signed by Kordt personally.

No. 7

LETTER FROM GERMAN
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON KORDT
TO AMBASSADOR DIRKSEN¹

GERMAN EMBASSY¹

London, September 1, 1938

Highly Esteemed Mr. Ambassador,

Many thanks for your friendly letter of the 24th ult. which I received with yesterday's courier. You will probably in the meantime have likewise received my letter of the 29th ult.²

They seem here to want to give themselves time for further consideration of the Franco note. Lord Plymouth has not yet invited me to come and see him again since he left for his country seat at the end of last week. But he has been back in London since Monday. I have meanwhile received instructions to leave the initiative entirely to the English. Perhaps our people will be satisfied with a visit from Hemming to elucidate unclear points. I have been told, however, to remain in this matter too only a listener.

¹ Embassy letterhead.

² See document 6.

Deutsche Botschaft

London, den 1. September 1938.

Sehr verehrter Herr Botschafter!

Verbindlichsten Dank für Ihr freundliches Schreiben vom 24.v.M., das mir der gestrige Kurier brachte. Inzwischen werden Sie mein Schreiben vom 29.v.M. ebenfalls erhalten haben.

In der Frage der weiteren Behandlung der Franco-Note scheint man sich hier Zeit lassen zu wollen. Lord Plymouth hat mich bisher noch nicht wieder kommen lassen, seitdem er Ende voriger Woche auf sein Gut gefahren ist. Er ist aber seit Montag wieder in London. Ich habe inzwischen Weisung erhalten, die Initiative ganz den Engländern zu überlassen. Vielleicht wird man sich mit einer Reise Hemmings zur Aufklärung von Unklarheiten bei uns abfinden. Ich bin aber angewiesen, mich auch in dieser Frage zunächst rezeptiv zu verhalten.

Die Einfuhr der in Ihrem Schreiben erwähnten Warengruppen hat sich in der letzten Woche erheblich verstärkt. Ich glaube, es ist an der Zeit, sich sehr energische Massnahmen zu überlegen, die diese Einfuhr bremsen können. Nach meiner Überzeugung würden diese Massnahmen keinen Aufschub. Was von hier aus veranlasst werden konnte, ist geschehen. Ich wende dieser Frage meine ganz besondere Aufmerksamkeit zu.

Über die in meinem letzten Schreiben erwähnte Kabinettsitzung habe ich dem Auswärtigen Amt den abschriftlich beigelegten Drahtbericht erstattet. Nach Ansicht der Engländer entsprechen die neuen tschechischen Vorschläge dem, was man hier unter „home rule“ versteht. Sie erfüllen angeblich sieben von den acht Karlsbader Forderungen.

Ferner übersende ich Ihnen zu Ihrer ganz persönlichen Kenntnisnahme Abschrift einer Aufzeichnung über eine Unterredung mit unseren Freunden, die ich dem Herrn St.S. privatbriefflich übermittelt habe. Herr von W. hat mir den Empfang mit dem Einzufragen bestätigt, dass meine Argumentation über

das

Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 7

Imports of the classes of goods mentioned in your letter have in recent weeks considerably increased. I believe that the time has come to consider very energetic measures to check these imports. It is my conviction that these measures brook no delay. Whatever could be undertaken at this end has been done. I am paying special attention to this matter.

Regarding the meeting of the Cabinet referred to in my last letter I sent the Foreign Office a telegraphic report, a copy of which I inclose. In the opinion of the British the new Czech proposals correspond to what is here understood as "home rule." They are supposed to meet seven of the eight Carlsbad demands.

I am also sending you, for your strictly confidential information, a copy of the minute of a conversation with our friend ¹ which I sent to the Secretary of State by private letter. Herr von W. ² has acknowledged receipt with the remark that my argument regarding what the British should do in respect to Czechoslovakia fully corresponds with what he himself would have said in a similar situation. The letter continues:

"As regards more general Anglo-German conversations, it goes without saying that you in London can likewise not adopt an entirely negative attitude, and should not destroy the hopes which many Englishmen place in such talks. However, I would always keep it in the forefront that unless the burning Czech question is settled there can be no question of discussions on wider issues."

I do not have to tell you, Mr. Ambassador, that the attitude of our friend ³ is not typical of the attitude of the

¹ Sir Horace Wilson (see footnote 3). This minute was not found among Dirksen's papers.

² Evidently, Weizsäcker.

³ After the words "our friend," above the line, the word "Horaz" is written in pencil. "Our friend" is obviously Horace Wilson.

British public. On the other hand, I do not doubt that Chamberlain will make every effort to reach an understanding with us, even if British public opinion puts every imaginable obstacle in his way. It would require considerable courage on Chamberlain's part to advise Czechoslovakia to fundamentally change her policy toward Germany. But a storm of public indignation will as little deter him from an aim which he has decided is correct as it would have deterred his father 39 years ago. The conversation took place in an exceedingly friendly atmosphere. Wo.¹ was visibly moved (as far as an Englishman can betray such feelings at all) when at the end he shook my hand and said: "If we two, Great Britain and Germany, come to agreement regarding the settlement of the Czech problem, we shall simply brush aside the resistance that France or Czechoslovakia herself may offer to the decision."

I presume that the most important of the conversations you still have in prospect will take place only after the 5th of this month. As I do not know what use Herr von W.² has made of my minute, I would request you to speak of it in this talk only after you have received Herr von W.'s permission. Otherwise it may well happen that a use made of its contents unforeseen by Herr von W. may give rise to confusion and complications.³

Th. Kordt⁴

¹ Evidently, Wilson.

² Evidently, Weizsäcker.

³ The concluding part of the letter is of a private nature.

⁴ Signed by Kordt personally.

wenn Sie die Autorisierung des Herrn von W. dafür erhalten haben. Es wäre sonst sehr leicht möglich, dass durch eine von Herrn von W. nicht vorausgesehene Verwertung des Inhalts Konfusion und Weiterungen entstünden.

Fräulein von Gressler ist von ihrem Urlaub zurück und steht Ihnen zur Verfügung, wenn Sie auch augenblicklich noch auf unserer österreichischen Abteilung ausfällt, wo sie dringend gebraucht wird. Herr von Rantau hat sich bisher noch nicht gemeldet. Ich nehme aber an, dass er in den nächsten Tagen eintrifft.

Der „Evening Standard“ hat inzwischen herausgefunden, dass Sie die Gewohnheit haben, dunkeläugigen Schattinnen besonders galante Komplimente zu machen. Ich habe bei gelegentlichen Anzapfungen auf diese lächerliche Meldung geantwortet, dass uns die männlichen Engländer leider wenig Zeit liessen, ihren in allgemeinen nicht dunkeläugigen Frauen tief in die Augen zu schauen.

Ich wünsche Ihnen und Ihrer sehr verehrten Frau Genahie, der ich in den nächsten Tagen antworten werde, weiter recht gute Erholung und alles Gute für die grossen Eindrücke des Parteitages. Hier ist alles wohl. Schlitten werde ich Ihren Brief erst nach seiner Rückkehr übergeben. Die Angelegenheit eilt ja nicht. Er ist zurzeit zum Bergkrazeln in Zermatt und wird Ihnen auf dem Parteitag begegnen, ebenso wie die Herren Bischoff, Jasper, Geyer und Templin und Fräulein Darsow.

Für eine gelegentliche Mitteilung, wann wir Sie zurückerwarten dürfen, wäre ich Ihnen zu besonderem Dank verpflichtet.

*Ich bin Ihnen
sehr dankbar
und bitte um
Ihre
guten Ratschläge
Th. Kordt*

No. 8

**LETTER FROM GERMAN
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON KORDT
TO GERMAN AMBASSADOR DIRKSEN**

GERMAN EMBASSY ¹

London, September 15, 1938

Highly esteemed Mr. Ambassador,

Accept my cordial thanks for your letters of the 7th and 13th inst. The letter of the 7th inst. from Nuremberg took a whole week to reach me.

Schlitter had just finished the description of the situation which he was to give me on your instructions when I received the news of the forthcoming visit of the Prime Minister to Obersalzberg. The universal relief which this news caused here is indescribable. I inclose a copy of my today's airmail message for your personal files. I shall never forget the scene at the aerodrome this morning.

If, as we all desire, the Obersalzberg talks dispel at least the heaviest of the clouds hanging over Europe, then we may hope that you will soon be returning to us. I have no need to assure you how glad we all shall be, and I myself in particular, when you resume charge of the affairs of

¹ Embassy letterhead.

the Embassy. God grant that you may then be able to tackle the splendid task which has been assigned to you for London.¹ At noon today at the club I was cheerfully accosted on all sides with expressions of approval of the fact that you had gone together with the Reichsminister to meet Mr. Chamberlain.

Your instructions regarding the secret documents and your personal papers shall be obeyed. It is to be hoped that the occasion for which they are intended will never arise.

The copy of your letter which Bielfeld brought me I return herewith.

With best wishes to you and your highly esteemed wife, whom unfortunately in the troubles and cares of these past days I have not yet answered, and with Heil Hitler,

Yours very sincerely,

*Th. Kordt*²

¹ "An die schöne Aufgabe herangehen können, die Ihnen für London gesetzt wurde."

² Signed by Kordt personally.

No. 9

MESSAGE FROM GERMAN
CHARGÉ D'AFFAIRES IN LONDON KORDT
TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE

Copy

For the Ambassador
London, September 15, 1938

AIRMAIL MESSAGE

Foreign Office,
Berlin
No.....¹ 15.9.

Never before have I witnessed such a sudden change of mood as that which took place yesterday evening all over Britain when it was announced that Chamberlain was going to see the Führer. Until the evening the whole British public was oppressed with the stern thoughts caused by the no less stern decision to take to arms under certain conditions. And now, wholly unexpectedly, a change had taken place which held out the hope of a peaceful solution. For the details, I would refer you to the circumstantial report of the German Information Bureau. The newspapers do not exaggerate when they say that men and women wept for joy in the streets.

¹ The number is not given.

This morning I went with Embassy Counsellor von Selzam to the Heston aerodrome to attend the departure of Chamberlain, who is accompanied by Sir Horace Wilson and Embassy Counsellor Strang. In front of the aerodrome there was a cheerful and excited crowd who shouted hearty greetings to the Premier. I congratulated the Premier on his decision and begged him to accept my best wishes on his journey. Visibly moved, he replied in simple and cordial terms that he hoped to be able by his talks with the Führer (he said expressly: "the Führer") to contribute to the consolidation of peace.

On the English side, there were present Lord Halifax and his wife and leading officials of the Foreign Office. All of them, and especially Lord Halifax, tried by their manner to make it clear to us Germans how sincerely glad they were that the Führer had immediately and cordially replied to the British Prime Minister's offer. Lord Halifax took me aside and asked me what impression the Prime Minister's initiative had made in Berlin, and was very pleased when I told him how warmly the German public welcomed Mr. Chamberlain's visit.

Lord Brocket, who also came with his wife, told me of the deep impression made on him by his talk with the Führer in Nuremberg, and said it was his firm conviction that the work of reconciliation would succeed.

Just before the plane left Mr. Chamberlain had to stand the crossfire of the press photographers. He then made a brief statement for the weekly newsreel which ran as follows:¹

"I am going to meet the German Chancellor because the situation seems to me one in which discussion between him and me may have useful consequences.

"My policy has always been to try and assure peace and Herr Hitler's ready acceptance encourages me to hope that my visit will not be without result."

The midday press prints detailed reports of Chamberlain's departure. The friendly tendency is unmistakable.

Th. Kordt

¹ In the original the statement is given in English.

No. 10

**LETTER FROM CHAIRMAN
OF THE ANGLO-GERMAN CHAMBER
OF COMMERCE IN LONDON MARKAU
TO CHIEF OF THE COMMERCIAL POLICY
DEPARTMENT OF THE GERMAN FOREIGN
OFFICE WIEHL**

Copy

*282, Shell-Mex House,
Strand, London W.C. 2,
November 17, 1938*

Herr Ministerialdirektor Wiehl,
Foreign Office,
Berlin W 8

Highly esteemed Herr Ministerialdirektor Wiehl,

I was sincerely glad to receive your letter of the 7th inst. containing your definite consent.¹ The contemplated list of speakers is as shown in the inclosure.

As you will see from the indicated themes of the speeches, my idea is that you and Mr. Hudson will speak of Anglo-German trade within the framework of world trade. Mr. Hudson has given me his view on the matter, which is that

¹ The reference is to a dinner arranged by the German Chamber of Commerce in Britain, to which both sides attached political importance as a demonstration of Anglo-German rapprochement in connection with the negotiations of the leading industrial federations of the two countries.

he believes there is sufficient room in the world for the sale of the industrial products of both countries. This thesis is to be the quintessence of his speech. If you, in the course of your remarks, will touch in one way or another on the successful work done last summer for the prolongation of the Anglo-German payments agreement, I would greatly appreciate it in view of the positive purposes our undertaking is designed to achieve.

My idea is to assign the second group of speakers the subject of Anglo-German trade relations, in connection with the activities of my Chamber. Lord Riverdale, who had already given his consent, has just been obliged to withdraw it because he will be away at the time on the continent for important negotiations. I will look for a suitable substitute from the industrial and business world. Herr Staatsrat Helfferich is prepared to speak; I will give him detailed instructions.

I should be very grateful, highly esteemed Herr Dr. Wiehl, if you would be good enough to let me know whether you are in agreement with the contemplated program of speeches. I should also be much obliged if you would send me your speech before your arrival, since we want to give a summary of it to the press. Moreover, the official speaker for the English side, that is, Mr. Hudson, has always requested us to inform him of what his partner is going to say, so as to adapt himself accordingly.

I take the liberty of hoping that you will agree to this.

With friendly greetings,

Heil Hitler!

Yours very sincerely,

Signed: *Dr. Markau*

Copy of inclosure:¹

Our Guests

proposed by
replied by

The Chairman
The German Ambassador

Germany and Great Britain
in the World Markets

proposed by
replied by

Ministerialdirektor Wiehl
Parl. Secr. Rt. Hon.
R. S. Hudson
Department of Overseas Trade

proposed by
replied by

Anglo-German Trade Relations
(Lord Riverdale)
Staatsrat Helfferich

The President

proposed by
replied by

.....²
The Chairman

¹ The program of speeches is given in English.
² The name of the speaker is not given.

No. 11

LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO CHIEF OF THE
COMMERCIAL POLICY DEPARTMENT OF THE
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE WIEHL

Croydon, December 17, 1938

Dear Herr Wiehl,

Many thanks for your friendly lines of December 9 and the inclosure of your letter to Herr Markau. I hope that the Chamber of Commerce dinner on January 23 will not be interfered with, all the more that Mr. Hudson has somewhat cooled off in the meantime.

As to Ashton-Gwatkin's visit, you have probably been informed by Herr Weber that he will be glad to come and expects to leave in the beginning of January. He has already received a communication from Ministerialdirektor Gritz-bach telling him that Field-Marshal Goering has fixed a day in the latter half of January to receive him.

I was very interested to hear that Ashton-Gwatkin's visit to Berlin is regarded in England as only, so to speak, a forerunner, to be later followed by that of Lord Runciman, as the principal personage. Ashton-Gwatkin is therefore only to clear the ground and to collect and sift material for the talks. I take it as a very good sign that the English

are thinking of sending Lord Runciman to Berlin; I believe that possibilities will be discovered for co-operation in many fields. I request you for the time being not to make any use of what I said about Runciman's visit; I have only informed Herr von Weizsäcker of it in a private letter.

The visit of President Schacht went off very well here; as regards the financing of Jewish emigration, I have reported on the subject in an airmail message; in respect to major questions of general economic policy, President Schacht could only so far cautiously feel his way. His own opinion was that it would be a long time before palpable results could be achieved.

With best wishes and Heil Hitler!

[*Dirksen*]

No. 12

**REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO THE
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE**

Copy for the Ambassador
London, July 10, 1939

A. 2718

In reference to report
of the 3rd inst.—No. 227
2 copies
Foreign Office,
Berlin

POLITICAL REPORT

Re: Stiffening Mood in Britain¹

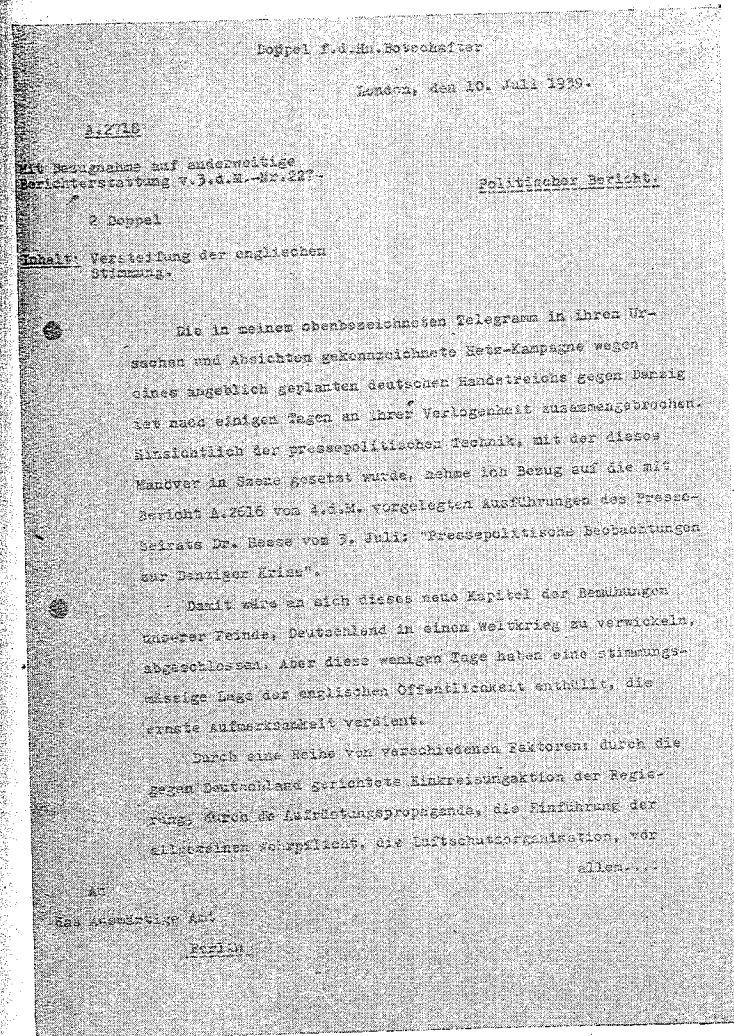
The inflammatory campaign in connection with an alleged German plan for a coup de main against Danzig, *the motives and intentions of which were indicated in my above-mentioned telegram*, collapsed after a few days, because of its mendacity. *Regarding the technique with which this*

¹ The passages printed in italics in this report of Dirksen's to the German Foreign Ministry of July 10, 1939, were omitted from the document as published in the Nazi White Paper (Auswärtiges Amt, N 2 "Dokumente zur Vorgeschichte des Krieges," Berlin 1939, Gedruckt in der Reichsdruckerei. N 252, S. 241-242). The German publication also omitted the file number of Dirksen's letter and his reference in the superscription to his earlier report. For the rest, the German original of the text from which this translation is made coincides with the text published by the German Foreign Office.

manoeuvre was staged by the press, I would refer you to Press Counsellor Dr. Hesse's "Political Review of the Press on the Danzig Crisis" of July 3, attached to Report A. 2616 of the 4th inst.

Therewith this new chapter in the efforts of our enemies to embroil Germany in a world war might, in itself, be considered concluded. But these few days have revealed a state of public feeling in Britain which deserves earnest attention.

Under the influence of a number of factors—the Government's policy of encircling Germany, the armament propaganda, the introduction of universal military service, air defence measures, above all the flood of anti-German propaganda in press, cinema, theatre and radio—the state of mind of the British public, which is so prone to emotional reactions, has been wrought to a pitch where the idea of "war" has become the focal point of thought and conversation. Shades of difference are to be observed only over the question: is war inevitable or not? The answer of the majority of ordinary Englishmen, in accordance with their sentiments, is in the affirmative; a thoughtful minority says no, recognizing that all existing points of conflict in Anglo-German relations can, given the good will, be settled, and that even a victorious war would bring no benefit to anybody. But even these, in themselves, sensible elements are influenced by the knowledge of the measures taken by the British armed forces: the Navy to be ready for action by the end of July, completion of military training and of organizational measures by the same date. The press reports, and, apparently, reports from agents in the possession of the competent authorities, to the effect that military measures are planned on the German side for August, operate in the same direction. At all events, even in responsible and thoughtful circles, August is expected to be a critical period of the first magnitude.



Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 12

ernste Realität gewertet werden, umso mehr in einem Lande, in dem die öffentliche Meinung eine so ausschlaggebende Rolle spielt, wie in England.

Es wäre falsch, aus dieser Erkenntnis der "public opinion" die Schlussfolgerung zu ziehen, dass Grossbritannien nun unwiderruflich in einen Krieg hineintriebe. Die Welle der Erregung wird ebenso abebben, wie sie angestiegen ist, sobald die Voraussetzungen dafür gegeben sind. Die wesentlichste Voraussetzung wäre eine ruhigere Atmosphäre in England, die eine vorurteilslosere Prüfung des deutschen Standpunktes ermöglichen würde. Ansätze dazu sind vorhanden. Innerhalb des Kabinetts und eines engen, aber einflussreichen Kreises von Politikern machen sich Bestrebungen geltend, über die Negativität der Einkreisungsfront zu einer konstruktiven Politik gegenüber Deutschland zu gelangen (vergl. Bericht A.2492 v. 24.5.11). So starke Gegenkräfte auch am Werke sind, um diese noch recht junge Pflanze zu ertöcken - die Pressekampagne des letzten Wochenendes bildet einen Teil davon -, so bietet doch die Paradoxie, dass Chamberlain eine gewisse Gewähr dafür, dass die englische Politik nicht den Händen gewissenloser Abenteurer ausgeliefert wird.

gez. von Virksen

The attitude toward the mental complex "war" varies. A small section of the British public reacts with hysterical approval; these people believe every horror story; they call for Polish and Russian aid and weaken the Government's tactical position in the negotiations with Russia. The majority, however, take a more manly attitude and think: If war really is unavoidable, we will fight with determination; and the sooner the better, so as to have it over and done with and quieter times may begin. The press reports from Germany to the effect that the Führer has returned to Berchtesgaden, that the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs and Colonel General von Brauchitsch have gone on leave, and that vacation time has begun, have done very little to quell the prevailing excitement.

To sum up, it may be stated that hostility toward Germany is growing, that the readiness to fight has become more pronounced, that there has been a stiffening in the feeling: We must not tolerate any more nonsense, our honour is at stake; we must fight; the Government must stand pat. *The talk in the German press that Britain is decadent, and that she is not ready to fight, has considerably strengthened this state of mind.*

The paramount difference between the British mood in the autumn of 1938 and now is that at that time the mass of the people did not want to fight and were passive; now they have taken over the initiative from the Government and are spurring the Cabinet on. Unfounded and dangerous as this attitude of the British public is, it must be taken as a serious reality, especially in a country like Britain, where public opinion plays so decisive a role.

It would be wrong to draw the conclusion from this description of the state of public opinion that Great Britain is irresistibly driving toward war. The wave of excitement will ebb just as it rose, as soon as the proper conditions exist. The

most important condition is a quieter atmosphere in England which would permit a more unprejudiced assessment of the German viewpoint. The germs of this already exist. Within the Cabinet and a small but influential group of politicians a desire is manifested to pass from the negativity of the encirclement front to a constructive policy¹ vis-à-vis Germany (cf. Report A. 2492 of June 24). And however strong the counterforces trying to stifle this still tender plant may be—the press campaign of the last week-end was part of them—Chamberlain's personality is a certain guarantee that British policy will not be placed in the hands of unscrupulous adventurers.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

¹ "Über die Negativität der Einkreisungsfront zur einer konstruktiven Politik...."

No. 13

MEMORANDUM OF GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN
REGARDING WOHLTHAT'S CONVERSATIONS
WITH WILSON AND HUDSON

Copy for the Ambassador

Strictly Secret

NOTE

Of his talks with Sir Horace Wilson and Mr. Hudson of the Department of Overseas Trade, Herr Wohlthat told me the following:

1. Hudson had let him know through the Norwegian member of the Whaling Commission that he would very much like to have a talk with him. Thereupon, with my consent, a meeting was arranged, which took place yesterday afternoon. At this conversation, Hudson developed far-reaching plans for Anglo-German co-operation in opening up new world markets and exploiting existing ones. He said, among other things, that there were still three big regions in the world where Germany and England could find wide opportunities for activity: the British Empire,¹

¹ "Das englische Empire."

China and Russia. England alone could not adequately take care of her vast empire, and it would be quite possible for Germany to be given a rather comprehensive share. Just as little could Japan satisfy all China economically; in Russia the situation was similar.

Hudson went on to speak in greater detail of a delimitation of German and British spheres of interest and of the possibility of avoiding deadly competition in common markets.

Herr Wohlthat got the impression that Hudson knows how to think on big lines and has a thorough grasp of the matter.

2. In his first conversation with Herr Wohlthat, Sir Horace Wilson put forward ideas which he developed in more detailed and positive form in the second. Sir Horace had prepared a paper in which a regular program was formulated; it began with the words: "Under the assumption that. . ."¹ (presumably: Under the assumption that political agreement with England is reached, the following points will enter into force). Sir Horace Wilson made it perfectly clear that Chamberlain approved this program; Wilson invited Wohlthat to have a talk there and then with Chamberlain, in which the latter would confirm what he had said. However, in view of the unofficial nature of his talks, Wohlthat did not consider it appropriate to have such a conversation with Chamberlain.

When, after the first conversation with Wilson, the opportunity for a talk with Hudson presented itself, Herr Wohlthat, with my acquiescence, arranged for a second talk with Wilson; he wanted to have greater clarity on certain points than it had been possible to get in the first con-

¹ In the original the words "Under the assumption that. . ." are in English.

versation. As his motive for suggesting this second conversation, he referred to his talk with Hudson and told Wilson that he wanted to give him an account of it and at the same time to ascertain whether Hudson had been speaking on the instructions of the Cabinet.

The program discussed by Herr Wohlthat and Sir Horace Wilson was as follows:

- a) Political points,
- b) Military points,
- c) Economic points.

Ad a)

1) *Pact of Non-Aggression.* Herr Wohlthat had taken this to mean the customary pacts of non-aggression such as Germany had concluded with other powers, but Wilson wanted the pact of non-aggression to be understood as renunciation of aggression in principle.

2) *Pact of Non-Intervention,* which was to include a delimitation of the spheres¹ of the Great Powers, in particular as between Britain and Germany.

Ad b) Limitation of Armaments.

- 1) Naval,
- 2) Land,
- 3) Air.

Ad c)

1) *Colonial Questions.* Here the subject chiefly discussed was how Africa could be developed. Wilson suggested the already known project for the formation of an extensive African colonial zone, for which certain uniform regulations were to be established. The question how far the German colonies which would be restored to us would remain our individual property after the creation of the international

¹ "Grossräume."

zone was left open. That the British in this respect are ready, or would be ready, at least in theory, to go a long way to meet us is to be presumed from the fact that Herr Wohlthat has quite reliably learned that in February the British Cabinet decided to restore the colonies, as such, to Germany. Sir Horace Wilson also spoke of German colonial activity in the Pacific; but on this question Herr Wohlthat was very reserved.

2) *Raw Materials and Their Acquisition by Germany.*

3) *Industrial Markets.*

4) *Settlement of the International Debt Problem.*

5) *Exchange of Financial Facilities.*¹

By this Sir Horace Wilson meant the sanitation of Eastern and Southeastern Europe by Germany. In connection with this point Herr Wohlthat said that Germany would have to insist on a qualified most favoured nation clause. When I asked Herr Wohlthat what this meant, he explained that the most favoured nation clause, coupled with a world-wide gold standard, as it had functioned before the war, was no longer as effective as it used to be. Owing to differences of currency systems and living standards, as well as of production costs, it was impossible to grant such different countries as Canada, Argentina and Rumania, for instance, the same privileges in their export trade with Germany. Countries like Rumania or Yugoslavia, with their low living standards, must be given better chances by allowing part of their products to be imported into Germany at lower customs rates. Herr Wohlthat said that he realized that this would be tantamount to the abolition of the most favoured nation system; it was however very important how the child was named, so as not to offend others.

¹ In the original these words are in English.

Herr Wilson¹ suggested as the general objective a broad Anglo-German agreement on all major questions, as had been originally envisaged by the Führer. In this way questions of such great importance would be raised and settled that the deadlocked Near Eastern questions, such as Danzig and Poland, would be pushed into the background and become immaterial. Sir Horace Wilson definitely told Herr Wohlthat that the conclusion of a non-aggression pact would enable Britain to rid herself of her commitments vis-à-vis Poland. As a result the Polish problem would lose much of its acuteness.

Asked by Herr Wohlthat whether Hudson's proposals had been approved, Wilson replied that they were discussed by influential members of the Cabinet, but without a final decision having been taken at this stage.

Herr Wohlthat thereupon remarked that a radical settlement of the questions discussed with Mr. Hudson would have to be preceded by a settlement of colonial questions.

To a further question by Herr Wohlthat, whether in that case the British Government would agree to the German side putting other questions, besides those enumerated, on the agenda, Wilson answered in the affirmative; he said that the Führer had only to take a sheet of paper and jot down his points; the British Government would be prepared to discuss them.

Then Herr Wohlthat asked how confirmation of this program of negotiations could be obtained through some responsible British representative or authority, in order that the negotiations might be put on a tangible footing.

To this Sir Horace Wilson replied that the decisive thing here was that the Führer should authorize some per-

¹ The name in the typescript is "Wohlthat," but it has been crossed out and the word "Wilson" written above in blue pencil.

son to discuss the above-mentioned program. If the Führer made his willingness known in this way, it was immaterial to the British how the further negotiations were conducted.

Referring to his conversation in June,¹ Herr Wohlthat told Sir Horace Wilson that he had made a report on it to Field-Marshal Goering; he added that he would try to find out whether the Führer considered that the moment had now come to start such discussions.

Sir Horace Wilson said very feelingly that if this succeeded, a most important step would have been made toward overcoming the difficulties.

Sir Horace Wilson further said that it was contemplated holding new elections in Britain this autumn. From the point of view of purely domestic political tactics, it was all one to the Government whether the elections were held under the cry "Be Ready for A Coming War!"² or under the cry "A Lasting Understanding With Germany in Prospect and Achievable!" It could obtain the backing of the electors for either of these cries and assure its rule for another five years. Naturally, it preferred the peaceful cry.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

London, July 21, 1939

Copies:

¹ For Counsellor Kordt, for his information.

² For the files in a closed envelope.

¹ It is clear from this that negotiations for an Anglo-German agreement were already being conducted in June. No other material relating to the June negotiations were found among Dirksen's papers.

² "Bereitschaft für einen kommenden Krieg."

No. 14

REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE

Copy for the Ambassador
London, July 24, 1939

Secret

A. 2974

Supplement to Reports
of June 24, 1939—A. 2492 and
of July 10, 1939—A. 2718¹
Foreign Office,
Berlin

POLITICAL REPORT

Re: Decision of the British Government to Adopt a
Constructive Policy

After the excitement caused by the Danzig week-end crisis had subsided, public feeling became more tranquil, which enabled the people in authority to concentrate their minds on the paramount question: was the Anglo-German tension driving to war, or could an adjustment be effected by peaceful means? Politicians, responsible and irresponsible, war-thirsty and sober, were unanimous in the opinion that the state of extreme tension which had lasted so many months could not continue much longer. But, whereas the

¹ See Document No. 12.

press and the majority of the politicians confined themselves to fatalism or to bellicose utterances, the few statesmen in England who really count gave deeper thought and more concrete shape to the views on a constructive policy toward Germany to which I referred in my report of June 24, 1939. The foreign and domestic tendencies mentioned in that report—strained relations with Japan, standstill of the negotiations for a pact with Russia, doubt as to the effectiveness of Poland as an ally, considerations of election tactics—have continued meanwhile to exert their influence and have strengthened the constructive tendencies.

General ideas as to how a peaceful adjustment with Germany could be undertaken seem to have crystallized into a number of concrete points which it is desired to discuss in their totality and simultaneously. On the basis of political appeasement, which is to insure the principle of non-aggression and to achieve a delimitation of political spheres of interest by means of a comprehensive formula, a broad economic program is being worked out which is to include the following questions: colonies, raw materials, economic spheres of interest, arrangements for co-operation in third markets. It goes without saying that armament limitation, as the point in which the English are most interested, has also been included in the program. About these plans entertained in leading circles, Staatsrat Wohlthat, who, on British initiative, had long talks about them during his stay in London last week, will be able to give more detailed information.

The problem which is puzzling the sponsors of these plans most is how to start the negotiations. Public opinion is so inflamed, and the warmongers and intriguers are so much in the ascendancy, that if these plans of negotiations with Germany were to become public they would immediately be torpedoed by Churchill and other incendiaries with

the cry "No second Munich!" or "No return to the appeasement policy!" How active and dangerous this group is was revealed by the publication of Wohlthat's confidential talks with Sir Horace Wilson and Secretary of Overseas Trade Hudson; additional poison was spread by the publication of an absolutely fantastic and false program of negotiations. The fact that the "Daily Telegraph" and the "News Chronicle" are the ringleaders in this inflammatory campaign clearly shows who are behind it.

The persons engaged in drawing up a list of points for negotiation therefore realize that the preparatory steps vis-à-vis Germany must be shrouded in the greatest secrecy. Only when Germany's willingness to negotiate has been ascertained, and at least unanimity regarding the program, perhaps regarding certain general principles, has been attained, will the British Government feel strong enough to inform the public of its intentions and of the steps it has already taken. If it could in this way hold out the prospect of an Anglo-German adjustment, it is convinced that the public would greet the news with the greatest joy, and the obstructionists would be reduced to silence.

So much is expected from the realization of this plan that it is even considered a most effective election cry, one which would assure the government parties a victory in the autumn elections, and with it the retention of power for another five years. However the election managers are also strongly convinced that certain victory could be equally won with the opposite cry—"Be Prepared For A Coming War!"—should there be no prospect of an adjustment with Germany.

This at the same time implies that the decision in principle to start negotiations with Germany, and the achievement of agreement in principle, are subject to a definite time limit. Since the elections are expected to be

held in November, and the organizational preparation for them will require about six weeks, the English side will have to make an effort to come to terms with Germany not later than the end of September. In respect to the time limit, there is even a certain optimism, since it is believed that the German side too—assuming there is a readiness for negotiations in principle—will wish to expedite the business in view of the Party Congress in Nuremberg.

In conclusion, I should like to point out that the German-Polish problem has found a place in this tendency toward an adjustment with Germany, inasmuch as it is believed that in the event of an Anglo-German adjustment the solution of the Polish problem will be easier, since a calmer atmosphere will facilitate the negotiations, and British interest in Poland will be diminished.

In view of the immoderate tone of the British press and politicians and the continued prosecution—although not with the former enthusiasm—of the encirclement policy, the above-mentioned plans of leading British statesmen may seem utopian. But they gain verisimilitude if one considers the limited influence of the British inflammatory press, and if one bears in mind that agreement with Germany is still Great Britain's dearest aim—in face of the alternative of war, which would be undertaken with the greatest reluctance, but which, failing agreement with Germany, is regarded as inevitable.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

No. 15

**MEMO MADE BY GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN
OF TELEPHONE CONVERSATIONS
WITH SIR HORACE WILSON
AND SIR ORME SARGENT**

Copy for the Ambassador

MEMO

I today telephoned Sir Horace Wilson and then Sir Orme Sargent (Sir Alexander Cadogan is away on leave) and told them that I wanted to make a few remarks in respect to the statements sponsored by Mr. Hudson in the press regarding his conversation with Herr Wohlthat. I kept almost literally to my notes, which were as follows: ¹

- 1) The initiative for the conversation between Mr. Hudson and Herr Wohlthat has not been taken by Herr Wohlthat but by the Norwegian delegate (asked by Mr. Hudson to act as intermediary).
- 2) As Mr. Hudson is alleged to have said to several newspaper representatives that the German Embassy has committed an indiscretion I should like to state that no member of the Embassy or

¹ The following three points are in English.

Herr Wohlthat himself has given any information about the meeting to anybody.

- 3) As to what Herr Wohlthat reported to me about his conversation with Mr. Hudson the report published in the papers is—to say the least—highly incorrect.

Sir Horace Wilson was very circumspect over the telephone and made no reply, so that to make certain I again asked whether I had expressed myself clearly, to which he replied in the affirmative.

With Sir Orme Sargent the conversation was longer, because he asked again whether it was really the Norwegian delegate who had acted as Mr. Hudson's intermediary, whereupon I gave him the substance of the Norwegian's talk with Herr Wohlthat in somewhat greater detail. I stressed that I had rung up Sir Orme Sargent because in view of the questions put in Parliament today the matter was probably very urgent.

Sir Orme Sargent also inquired in passing about the substance of the conversation between Herr Wohlthat and Mr. Hudson, whereupon I said that the alleged loan had played no role in the conversation, which in the main had centred around the opening of world markets, co-operation, price regulation and foreign exchange questions.

Sir Orme Sargent thanked me for my communication and said that he would immediately make an urgent minute of it.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

London, July 24, 1939

Herewith:

1. For Herr Kordt,
2. For Herr von Selzam,
3. For Dr. Hesse,
for their information.
4. For the files.

No. 16

**REVIEW OF THE BRITISH PRESS
FROM JULY 10-24, 1939,
BY PRESS COUNSELLOR OF THE GERMAN
EMBASSY IN LONDON HESSE**

PRESS COUNSELLOR
TO THE EMBASSY

London, July 24, 1939

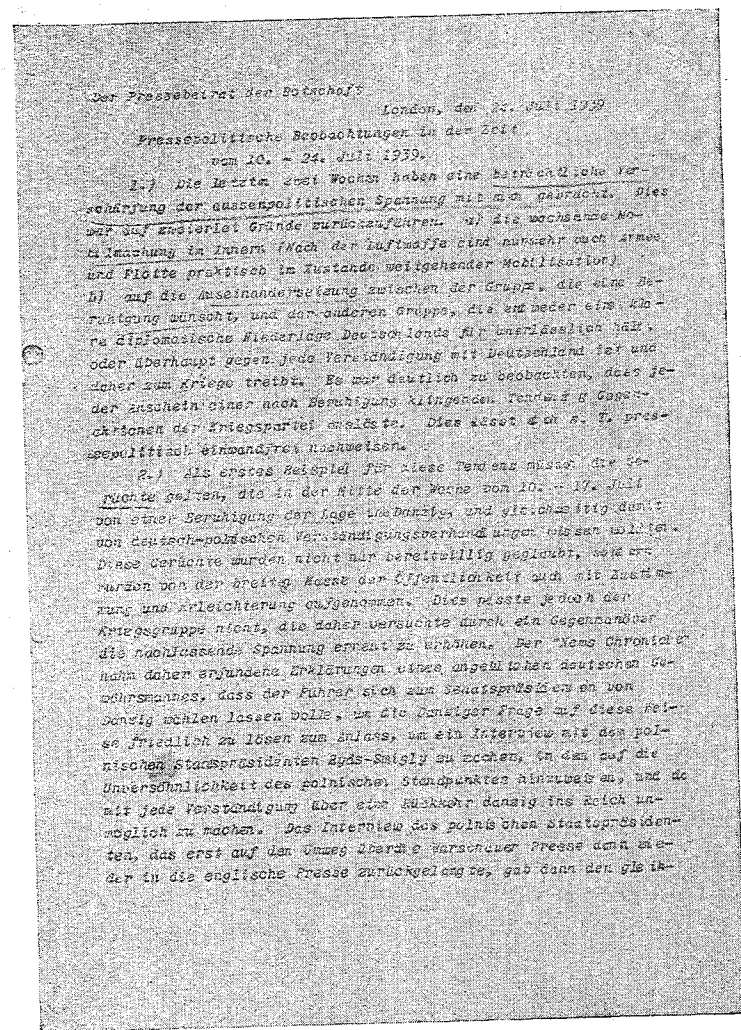
POLITICAL REVIEW OF THE PRESS

July 10-24, 1939

1) In the past two weeks the tension in the sphere of foreign politics has grown considerably more acute. This is to be attributed to two causes: a) the increasing scale of mobilization at home (following on the Air Force, the Army and the Navy too are practically in a state of advanced mobilization), and b) the conflict between the group which desires pacification and the group which either considers a distinct diplomatic defeat for Germany indispensable, or is in general opposed to any understanding with Germany, and is therefore driving for war. It was clearly to be observed that any semblance of a tendency toward appeasement provoked counteraction from the war party. This may in part be irrefutably demonstrated by an examination of press policy.

2) As a first illustration of this tendency may be cited the rumours current in the middle of the week July 10-17 regarding an improvement of the situation in Danzig, and also of negotiations for an understanding between Germany and Poland. These rumours were not only readily believed, but were accepted by the broad mass of the public with approval and a feeling of relief. This however did not suit the war party, which therefore attempted by means of a counter-manoeuve to tighten up the relaxing tension. The "News Chronicle" took a fictitious statement of a supposedly German spokesman, to the effect that the Führer intends to have himself elected President of the Danzig Senate in order in this way to solve the Danzig problem in a peaceful manner, as an excuse for an interview with the Polish President Rydz-Smigly, with the object of stressing the irreconcilability of the Polish viewpoint, and thus rendering any agreement for the restoration of Danzig to the Reich impossible. The interview of the Polish President, which found its way into the British press in a roundabout way, through the Warsaw press, furnished these same circles with an excuse for forcing the British Government to declare again that it would under all circumstances come to Poland's assistance, if Poland was prepared to fight. A section of the press declared more emphatically than ever that any unilateral alteration of Danzig's status would be a justification for Polish interference, while Polish propaganda was able more energetically than formerly to argue that the loss of Danzig to the Reich would result, because of strategical reasons, in the loss of Poland's independence. No German argument to show that the possession or loss of Danzig had no bearing on Poland's strategical position has been published here.¹

¹ Annotation in the left margin, in black pencil: "How could this be done? It was done in conversations."



Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 16

3) The consequence of this hardening of public opinion more definitely and one-sidedly in favour of Poland was that the tone of the press on the Danzig question became more violent than ever. It therefore came as a great surprise when reports appeared here, based on statements alleged to have been made at a press conference in the Ministry of Propaganda, containing two assertions: a) that the Führer was 100 per cent determined not to allow a world war to break out on account of Danzig, and b) that the Führer at the same time expected a 100 per cent solution of the Danzig problem in favour of Germany. In view of the tension prevailing here, these statements could only be taken as a German change of line. The way it was featured and treated in the press made it at once apparent how great the relief would be here if it were found possible to settle the Danzig problem peacefully by means of negotiations; at the same time it was also apparent how extraordinarily powerful the counterforces are. The first favourable impression produced by the statement was followed by two measures which at once weakened the impression, and to some extent turned it into its very antithesis. The first was a statement issued by the German Information Bureau which created the impression here that the German side wanted to retreat from the first statement; the second was a commentary by the Press Department of the Foreign Office, which thought it necessary to point to the contradictoriness of the German statement and also to stress that the British Government's attitude, as expressed in Chamberlain's last statement, remained unaltered. The combined effect of these two statements was to create distrust in Germany's intentions, which was distinctly to be observed in all the comments. The Foreign Office further requested the press to treat the incident very sharply, in order that "the impression might not be created in Germany that Britain was disposed to al-

low herself to be fooled by a trick." This cry was taken up by the "Times," which, in particular, attributed to the German spokesman the statement that the Führer reckoned that in the end the British Cabinet would bring pressure to bear upon Warsaw to compel it to yield. Such a remark would in fact be calculated to create personal difficulties for Chamberlain, since his stiff attitude is partly attributable to the fact that his opponents suspect that he will one day make another change of front and return to the policy of "appeasement." Reproaches of this kind and the suspicion that Chamberlain wants to take advantage of the autumn parliamentary recess to execute such a manoeuvre are already being voiced in the "News Chronicle," "Daily Herald" and "Yorkshire Post," and strike at one of the most sensitive spots of the domestic political situation. That the "Times" partly garbled the alleged German statement only shows how excited and sensitive Chamberlain's followers are on this point. The result consequently was a repeated and more vigorous statement of the British standpoint in a leading article in the "Times" on July 24. The article is in fact a full and complete reflection of the present government view on the Danzig question. It also shows quite unambiguously what is regarded here as the weak point in the Danzig question. The article, namely, repeats that the incorporation of Danzig into the Reich would, from strategical reasons, mean the loss of Poland's independence. Former Foreign Secretary Eden expressed himself similarly in the "Sunday Times." If it could be proved that this opinion regarding the significance of the restoration of Danzig to the Reich is false, the propaganda here would in a large measure collapse. For this it would be necessary to stress two things: a) that even now Poland has no free access to the sea, but only to an inland sea, which is controlled by Germany, and which in the event

of a war would immediately be locked, and b) that the Corridor, in the event of war, would be lost to Poland within a few hours, and that Poland therefore even now has no thought of defending it. In private conversations, both these arguments already make an impression, what is lacking is support for these strategical arguments from Germany.

4) It has to be recognized that in the present state of tension sober argument is extremely difficult. But the effectiveness of the German propagandist arguments regarding Danzig is also considerably impaired by the fact that statements are continually being made which are represented by our enemies here in England as grave insults to British honour. This was to some extent the case with the article of the Reichsminister of Propaganda in reply to the unseemly utterances of St. King-Hall. I myself was told by the chief of the Foreign Office press department in a heated conversation that strictly speaking one could reply to such an article only with a declaration of war, while the Prime Minister's adviser on public relations tried to explain to me that such an article must give the Prime Minister the impression that Germany had abandoned all idea of an understanding with Britain and in the end wanted war. These statements are naturally to be attributed to the overexcited state of the gentlemen in question and to the desire to exert a propaganda influence on me, as well as to a rather artificial oversensitiveness. They also, however, show how expedient it is, at least as seen from here, to display a somewhat milder tone, that is, if there is still a desire for sober argument in Germany. It should be borne in mind that St. King-Hall is not a person of any standing. He is regarded as a shady politician whom nobody wants to have anything to do with. It can at any rate be definitely stated that Lord Halifax is not behind him, and that King-

Hall gets the inspiration and the money for his newsletters not from the British Government, but most probably from émigrés, Czechs and Jews. Beneš is known to have collected large sums in America which are exclusively used for the "liberation of Czechoslovakia." That St. King-Hall is a member of the Committee of Action for the "liberation of Czechoslovakia," which is chiefly composed of Left Liberals, Marxists and Jews, is known, as it is also known that he has close relations with the so-called German Freedom Party. Under these circumstances, it is understandable that violent statements against the British Government are exploited by all our enemies for a most malicious domestic-political campaign. It is undeniable that the extraordinarily excited atmosphere in London and the conflict over the question whether there is still any possibility of an understanding with Germany in general, very materially facilitate the misuse of sharp German utterances, which under other circumstances would not have the same effect.

5) An example of this remarkable atmosphere is the handling and exploitation for political purposes by the press of Dr. Wohlthat's conversation with Trade Minister Hudson. Rumours of Dr. W.'s talk had been circulating for many days, which however it was possible to deny, until the Minister himself thought it necessary, on request, to give superfluous information to the press. I am reliably assured here that the responsibility for the indiscretion must be laid at the door of the French Embassy, which learned of the talk on Friday and immediately sounded the alarm. But as the alarm of the French friends in England came too late on Friday to find reflection in the Saturday press, the reaction only came in the Monday press. Hudson's statements are symptomatic of the psychological situation, which for the time being does not permit influential government men to betray even an appearance of desiring an un-

derstanding. Part of Hudson's exaggerated and improper statements to the press can at all events be explained only by the fact that he feared he might be accused of being a partisan of appeasement. Indicative of the circles in England which are striving to prevent any rapprochement with Germany is the fact that the first to open the crossfire were Vernon Bartlett of the "News Chronicle" and Gordon Lennox of the "Daily Telegraph," and that G. Lennox was particularly malicious in twisting and garbling the conversation.

6) In view of the present domestic-political situation, it is to be presumed that the efforts to increase the tension will be considerably intensified in the next two weeks, the last two weeks of Parliament. Duff Cooper has proposed in the press that a sort of parliamentary supervisory council, consisting chiefly of opponents of adjustment, should be set up to prevent Chamberlain from reverting to the policy of appeasement. It must therefore be presumed that the press of these circles ("News Chronicle," "Daily Herald," "Daily Telegraph") will, by means of a corresponding press campaign, do their utmost so to tie the hands of the Government that it will have no freedom of action in respect to an understanding with Germany.

Signed: *Dr. Fritz Hesse*

No. 17

**TELEGRAM FROM GERMAN
FOREIGN MINISTER RIBBENTROP
TO AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN**

Copy for the Ambassador

CODE TELEGRAM

*Berlin, 31 July [193] 9. 13 h. 18 m.
London, 31 July [193] 9. 14 h. 10 m.*

German Embassy,
London

Very urgent!

286 of 31.7

For the Ambassador personally

Please immediately send telegraphic report on the substance of Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat's negotiations during his last visit to London, especially a report on Wohlthat's conversations with you, since he states that the political negotiations were conducted in agreement with the Ambassador.

Ribbentrop

No. 18

**REPORT OF GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN
TO THE GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE**

Copy for the Ambassador

CODE TELEGRAM

Foreign Office, Berlin

Very urgent! No.....¹ of 31.7

In reply to telegraphic instructions No. 286 of 31.7

Personally for the Reichsminister

1. During his stay here Ministerialdirektor Wohlthat was invited for a talk both by Sir Horace Wilson and Secretary for the Department of Overseas Trade Hudson. In agreement with me W. responded to the request, and he informed me of the substance of the conversations orally. I sent a telegraphic report on his stay here (see telegram No. 263 of 23.7.) and a written report (A. 2974 of 24.7.)² on his talks with Wilson.

2. In my talks with Wohlthat we particularly discussed how far what Wilson had communicated to him harmonized with the tendency toward a constructive policy I had observed on the part of government circles here (see Report

¹ In the original the number is omitted.

² See Document No. 14.

A. 2492 of 24.6. and A.2718 of 10.7.).¹ We were able to establish that the general tendencies which had hitherto been observed had now crystallized into a plan, based principally on economic policy; which had been worked out by Chamberlain, or at least approved by him.

3. Summarizing my reports, I should like to repeat that the initiative taken by Wilson and Hudson is to be attributed to the following view prevailing here:

a) That the Anglo-German tension will lead to a war if an effort is not made to adjust mutual relations;

b) That the British encirclement policy is a menace to peace and is fraught with considerable risk to Britain;

c) That the state of British armament makes it possible for the Government to seek an adjustment with Germany without being suspected of weakness.

4. Wilson's desire principally to discuss with Wohlthat his ideas on economic policy is presumably to be attributed to the fact that Wilson, the Chief Economic Adviser of the British Government, considered Wohlthat, as Commissioner² for the Four-Year Plan, a suitable expert in this field. Wohlthat, as one of the newspapers here put it, played the part of a polite listener, as is also evident from the fact that he flatly declined Wilson's offer to have the ideas he proposed corroborated by a political authority (Prime Minister Chamberlain), because he, Wohlthat, did not think himself empowered for this.

Dirksen

¹ See Document No. 12.

² The word "Commissioner" is written in pencil above "Economic Adviser," which is stricken out.

No. 19

**TELEGRAM FROM SECRETARY OF STATE
IN GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE WEIZSÄCKER
TO AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN**

A¹ 3104²

Berlin, 31 July [193]9. 22 h. 30 m.

London, 31 July [193]9. 23 h. 30 m.

German Embassy,
London

289 of 31.7

In supplement to No. 286³ A¹ 3101²

For the Ambassador personally

Wohlthat on his return to Berlin made a report of his conversation with Sir Horace Wilson, which was sent by Field-Marshal Goering to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. The report says that Wilson suggested comprehensive Anglo-German co-operation, that is, a political, military and economic understanding. These overtures seem to be regarded by the British side as an official feeler. Wohlthat obviously did not put Wilson the natural ques-

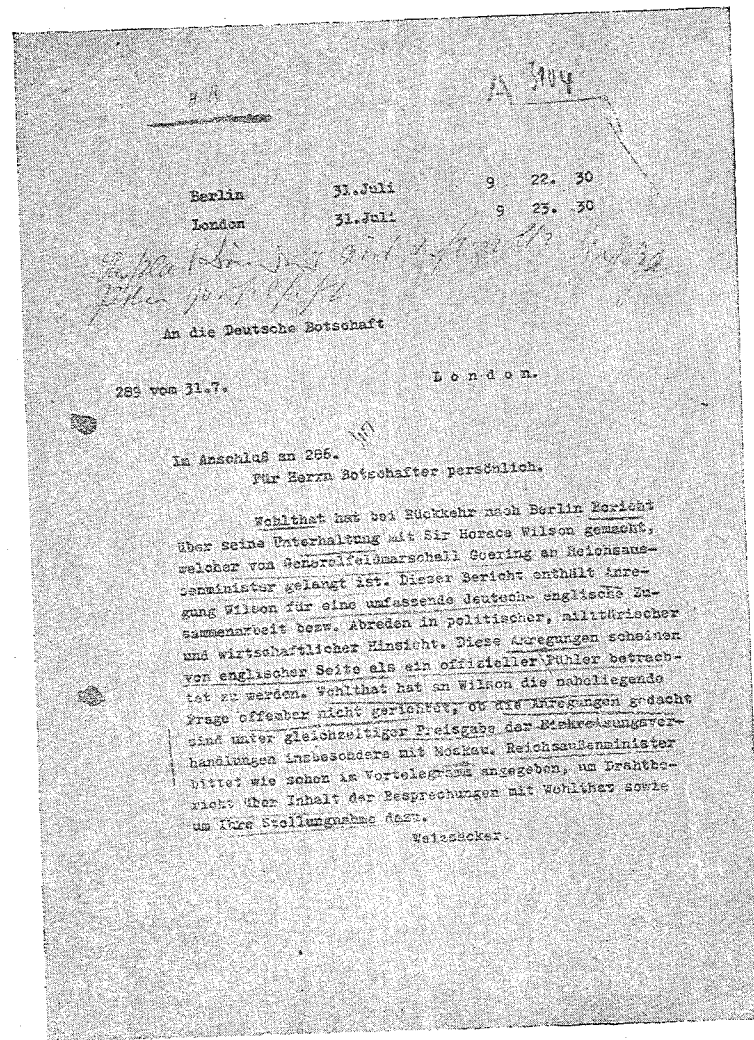
¹ Stamp.

² Figures in blue pencil.

³ See Document No. 17.

tion: whether these overtures presume at the same time the abandonment of the encirclement policy negotiations, in particular with Moscow. As stated in the previous telegram, the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs requests a telegraphic report on the substance of the conversations with Wohlthat and on your attitude toward the matter.

Weizsäcker



No. 20

**REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO THE GERMAN
FOREIGN OFFICE**

Copy for the Ambassador
London, July 31, 1939

Strictly Confidential

A. 2964

I inclosure in duplicate
In reply to telegraphic instruction No. 267 of 22 inst.
Foreign Office,
Berlin

**Re: Enlightening the British Public on German Foreign
Policy Problems, Especially the Danzig Question.**

I. Premises for all propaganda activity.

II. Suggested methods of publicity:

- a) Material for articles,
- b) Letters to the Editor,
- c) Distribution of pamphlets, etc.,
- d) Polish statements,
- e) Miscellaneous.

III. Past activity of the Embassy:

- a) Letters to the Editor,
- b) Lectures by a non-German agent,
- c) Arrangement of talks and lectures by a person
from Danzig,

- d) Utilization of reports of the German authorities in Poland,¹
- e) Utilization of the Führer's speech of April 28, 1939,
- f) Guiding articles for the German and British press.

I

Publicity relations between any two countries are faced by the following alternative: either to retaliate to every attack and every calumny with a correspondingly sharp reply, on the principle of "tit for tat"—in which case one must give up the idea of awakening understanding for one's own political views and intentions in the press of the other country and obtaining publicity for them; or one must refrain from paying back every attack from the other side in the same coin and concentrate more on the dissemination of one's own political arguments in the press and among the public of the other country. A practical combination of the two alternatives is impossible: one cannot wage a press campaign *and* at the same time expect journalistic hearing for and dissemination of one's own ideas.

These general remarks are particularly important in view of the present state of Anglo-German publicity relations and of our desire to have the British public understand our work and aims. For, if we want to enlighten public opinion here on our problems, in particular, regarding Danzig, the Eastern question and the colonies, it is indispensable that German anti-British propaganda through the press, radio and other channels be revised, in order that a calmer general atmosphere may be created. It is

¹ "Die deutschen Behörden in Polen."

impossible to work with any hope of success for an understanding of the German viewpoint on the Danzig question, if the Royal pair, the British Army and British institutions are violently attacked or ridiculed by our propaganda, or if public opinion is continuously and increasingly annoyed and excited by the mass distribution of badly translated German articles which are offensive to the British mentality.

If this premise is fulfilled, thought can then be given to which methods of active publicity are likely to be most effective.

II

a) Mention has already been made in Report No. A 2925, of the 21st inst., of the chief reasons which hinder the placing in newspapers here, even in those of the Right opposition, of the kind of material hitherto sent, although it is undoubtedly of value for the information of *the Embassy*. Furthermore, it must be pointed out that the British press—at least the influential part—makes it a principle not to print outside material, but only articles by its own contributors. The material supplied by the Embassy could at best appear only as a product of the given periodical, after editorial revision. Now and again, perhaps, suitable material (as described in the above-mentioned report) might be printed as it is. But as a rule even such material could serve only to inform and mould the opinion of the editors.

Suitable for distribution in the United Kingdom would be good translations of individual articles from the "Deutsche Diplomatische Korrespondenz," whose style on the whole suits the British mentality. If it should be possible from time to time to send several copies of the translations already

on the day before their appearance in Germany, the prospects for their publication in the press here would be considerably enhanced.

b) Apart from this, "Letters to the Editor" still offer the best facilities for publicity, as was stated in point 3 b of the annex to the report of the 8th inst.—A. 2725. As there indicated, such letters might be written either from England or from Germany. However, from organizational considerations, it would seem expedient if two or three competent writers in Germany were to devote themselves exclusively to the study of the fifteen or twenty leading newspapers and weeklies appearing in the United Kingdom and to writing letters in reply to arguments contained in leading articles or in "Letters to the Editor." If these "Letters to the Editor" are written in matter-of-fact style and in fairly good English and are exempt from all crude polemics, there is a reasonable certainty that they will be published. Even if occasionally they are not published, they will help to influence editorial opinion.

Irrespective of these organized replies from Germany, the Embassy will continue to make it its business to have letters written from here.

c) Very effective is the distribution of suitably written pamphlets in English. I would refer in this connection to point 2 of the annex to the report of the 8th inst.—A. 2725. The reaction to Herr Fuchs' pamphlet from Danzig so far observed has been quite satisfactory. A report on this matter will be sent later.

Success may be predicted for the collection of British opinions in book form which Frau Margarete Gärtner is planning. This may also be said of the plan for a new edition of Dawson's book and of his article printed in the "Nineteenth Century" in 1931 (December issue).

d) Finally, it is again requested that the Embassy be

kept regularly informed of aggressive statements by Polish politicians, with exact indication of the sources. Such statements are hushed up by the press here. The Embassy has opportunities of utilizing them.

e) Further suggestions will be found in point III f.

III

a) In spite of the circumstances enumerated in section I which make all publicity activity extremely difficult, the Embassy's publicity work has certain achievements to record. I would refer to Sir Arnold Wilson's letter, which was inspired by us, recounting his impressions of his recent visit to Danzig, which appeared in the "Times" on July 7, 1939, and to the letter of Professor Haferkorn, which was printed in the "Times" on the 28 inst. and which was also compiled in conjunction with the Embassy. Other letters of a similar nature are circulated. The historian Sir Raymond Beazley, advised by the Embassy, regularly sends letters to influential provincial papers.

b) The Ukrainian, W. von Korostovetz, who, as has already been reported, has excellent connections, particularly in Conservative circles, has been commissioned to discuss the Danzig question at length in lectures to Conservative Party meetings in London and the provinces. Herr von Korostovetz says that his remarks on this theme arouse general interest.

c) In addition, the Embassy, naturally, constantly endeavours in private talks and conversations to influence authoritative persons and to induce them likewise to do a certain amount of propaganda. Such conversations on the Danzig question occur daily. In this connection, mention should be made of the work of Professor Haferkorn, who

has been here for about three weeks and has been put in touch by the Embassy with influential persons, among others, with Lords Arnold, Brocket, Queenborough and Noel-Buxton, the Duke of Buccleuch, Geoffrey Dawson, the editor-in-chief of the "Times," and his assistants, Deakin and Kennedy, Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence General Ismay, General Sir Wyndham Childs, Members of Parliament Sir Thomas Moore, Sir Arnold Wilson, V. Cazalet and many others. Haferkorn has put the Danzig viewpoint skilfully and, as has been established, has done good publicity work.

It would be desirable if other suitable persons, preferably if possible citizens of the Free City of Danzig, were sent here for this purpose.

d) The reports regularly sent to the Embassy regarding the treatment of the German minority in Poland, especially the material contained in the letter of May 11, 1939—No. Pol. V 3303—have been forwarded to high government quarters, the last-named report in an English translation which was made here.

e) Regarding the utilization of the Führer's speech of April 28 of this year, I would refer to my report of April 29, 1939—No. A 1687.

f) Inclosed herewith is an article written by the Embassy's Press Counsellor, Dr. Hesse, in which he deals with the usual arguments on the Danzig question current here. It was generally to be observed that Polish propaganda in Britain resorted to the following three main arguments:

The reincorporation of Danzig into the Reich would

- 1) threaten Poland's political independence,
- 2) thoroughly change the strategical situation to Poland's disadvantage,
- 3) jeopardize Poland's economic independence.

The inclosed article replies to these arguments in a form suited to the British mentality. It would be of help to the work of the Embassy if this article were published as widely as possible in Germany over the signature of some authoritative person. In that case, the Embassy would request to have 500 copies in English at its disposal on the day before its publication in Germany. If the article were to appear over the name of the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, it may be predicted that it will be assured the widest publicity in the United Kingdom.

Signed: *von Dirksen*



No. 21

**REPORT OF GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN
TO SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE GERMAN
FOREIGN OFFICE WEIZSÄCKER**

Copy for the Ambassador

Foreign Office, Berlin

No. 278 of 1.8.1939

In reply to telegram No. 289 of 31.7.¹

For the Secretary of State personally

AIRMAIL MESSAGE

1. Respecting the Wohlthat-Sir Horace Wilson conversation and my attitude toward it, I would refer to my telegraphic report No. 277 of 31.7.² The fact that Wohlthat did not expressly raise the question of abandonment of the encirclement policy is to be attributed to the understanding he had with me that he should in general remain receptive and reserved.

2. Although the talk did not go deeply into the political side, I have the impression that the idea was, by way of economic questions, to propose to us a comprehensive constructive program. The difficulties the British Government would have to face in carrying out this program, in view

¹ See Document No. 19.

² See Document No. 18.

of the prevailing state of public feeling, have been described in my report of 24.7.—A. 2974.¹

3. That an adjustment with Germany is incompatible with a simultaneous prosecution of the encirclement policy is obvious to leading persons here. The determining considerations in this respect are roughly as follows:

a) An adjustment with Germany would, so to speak, chemically dissolve the Danzig problem and open the way for a German-Polish settlement in which Britain need no longer be interested.

b) The continuation of the negotiations for a pact with Russia, in spite of—or rather, just because of—the dispatch of a military mission, is regarded here with scepticism. This is borne out by the composition of the British military mission: the admiral, until now Commandant of Portsmouth, is practically in retirement; and was never on the staff of the Admiralty; the general is likewise purely a combatant officer; the air general is an outstanding aviator and air instructor, but not a strategist. This indicates that the object of the military mission is more to ascertain the fighting value of the Soviet Army than to make operational arrangements.

A high officer in the Air Ministry in a recent talk with our Air Attaché expressed the conviction that neither the British nor the Russian side sincerely wants an agreement.

c) There is still doubt regarding Poland's military value, which finds expression in financial reservedness. General Ironside's report is likewise said not to have been excessively favourable.

d) The Labour Party politician Roden Buxton (brother of Lord Noel-Buxton), who has excellent connections, expressed in conversation with the Embassy Counsellor

¹ See Document No. 14.

a similar line of thought to Wilson's, and remarked that the abandonment of the encirclement policy would be a self-understood corollary of an adjustment with Germany. A minute of the conversation with Buxton is being sent with this airmail.

4.¹ The impression that the possibility of an agreement in principle with Germany must be arranged in the next few weeks, in order that the election cries may be determined (see report of 24.6.—A. 2974), is growing stronger and stronger. It is hoped that the abatement of political feeling which is expected to come with the beginning of the vacations will create the premises for the framing of a program of negotiations that will have a chance of realization.

Dirksen

¹ In the original this paragraph is erroneously also numbered "3."

No. 22

**REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN
TO SECRETARY OF STATE IN THE
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE WEIZSÄCKER**

Copy for the Ambassador

GERMAN EMBASSY

A. 3107
1 inclosure

London, August 1, 1939
Copy

Re: Anglo-German Relations

Submit to the Secretary of State *immediately*.

I inclose herewith copy of a minute made by Embassy Counsellor Kordt of a talk he had last Saturday with the Labour politician Mr. Charles Roden Buxton. Although Mr. Roden Buxton does not belong to the government party, and his ideas on foreign policy are contrary to those of the majority of the Labour Party, I nevertheless believe that what he said is deserving of some interest. The term "spheres of interest," in the sense of a delimitation of the Grossräume of the chief Powers, was also used by Sir Horace Wilson in his talk with Herr Staatsrat Wohlthat. It is further noteworthy that in his speech in the House of Com-

mons yesterday Chamberlain—like Buxton—specifically referred to the Anglo-French agreement of 1904 and the Anglo-Russian treaty of 1907, although in another connection: the Prime Minister pointed out that nine months of negotiations were required in 1904, and fifteen months in 1907 before successful results were obtained. Chamberlain wanted thereby to take the sting out of the reproach that the negotiations with the Soviet Government were being excessively protracted.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

INCLOSURE

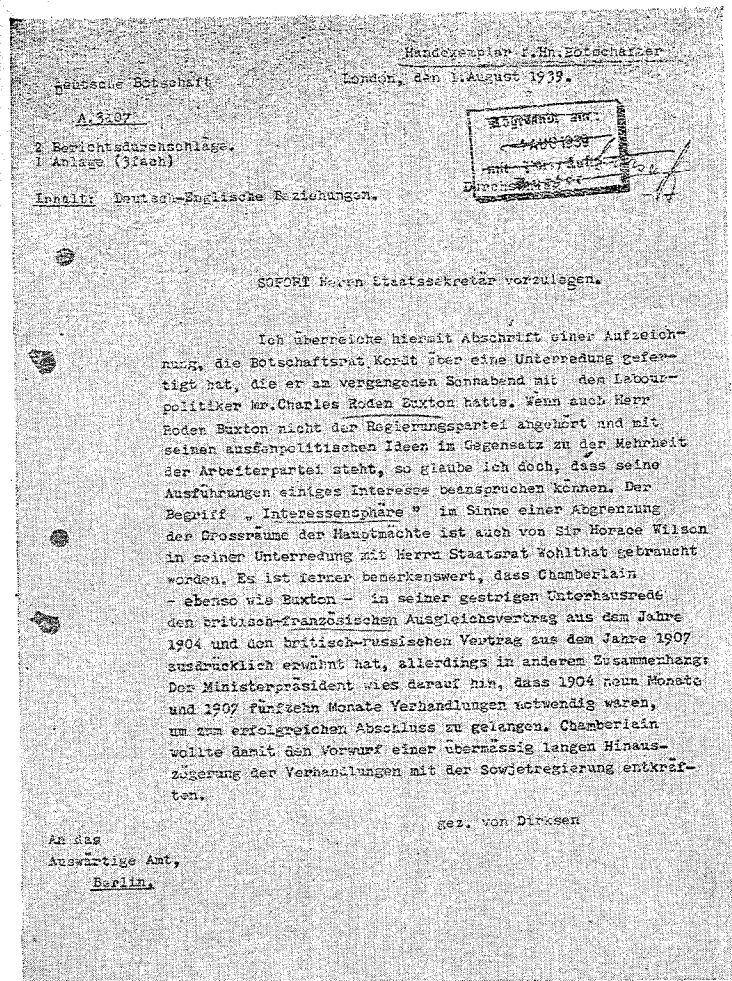
MINUTE

A¹ 3107²

Today, July 29, 1939, by previous arrangement, I was visited for a private talk by the former Labour Member of Parliament, Mr. Charles Roden Buxton, brother of the well-known Labour Peer, Lord Noel-Buxton. Mr. Roden Buxton, who at present has no mandate, is active in the Labour Party leadership in a post which may be compared with that of a leading General Staff officer in the Operations Department. He has a special office in the House of Commons and acts as political expert to the Labour Party. He and his wife became known in Germany owing to their courageous defence of the German civilian population during the French occupation of Upper Silesia and the Ruhr. Mr. Roden Buxton is a Quaker, and because of his knowledge of Euro-

¹ Stamp.

² Number inserted in blue pencil.



Photostatic copy of Document No. 22

pean problems and his excellent personal qualities enjoys a very good reputation even among his political opponents.

Mr. Roden Buxton began by saying that he was speaking neither on behalf of the Labour Party nor on behalf of the Government. He however wanted to let me know his views on the possibility, which in his opinion still existed, of avoiding a conflagration. He had arrived at the conviction that public discussion of means of preserving the peace could today no longer achieve its purpose. The nations were excited to such a pitch that any public attempt to arrive at a reasonable settlement would immediately be sabotaged. It would therefore be necessary to revert to a sort of secret diplomacy. Leading circles in Germany and Great Britain must endeavour to find a way out of the intolerable situation by conversations from which the public was totally excluded. He had in mind a way which at one time, in 1904, had enabled Lord Lansdowne to break the tension with France, and which had also proved its value in 1907 in relieving the tension with Russia.

In 1904 and 1907 Britain had essentially been confronted with the same problems as today. From 1898 till 1904 France had taken advantage of every opportunity to create difficulties for the British Empire in all parts of the world, because she thought there was no way out of the existing strained situation except by acquiring as many allies as possible for the coming war. The negotiations which were begun, to the entire exclusion of the public, led to the agreement of 1904, by which France was assigned North-West Africa and Great Britain North-East Africa. Such too was the case in 1907. At that time Russia was trying to undermine the Empire in South Persia, Afghanistan and Thibet. Here again, by the agreement of 1907, the antagonisms were eliminated by means of the creation of spheres of interest.

He wondered whether it would not be possible to apply the same method today vis-à-vis Germany. The term *Lebensraum* coined by the Führer already pointed in this direction. Here I interrupted Mr. Roden Buxton to remark that British policy had done exactly the opposite. It had interfered in matters which in no way came within its spheres of interest. It had even given guarantees to States which did not need them, and it had instigated the Polish Government to an absolutely intransigent attitude toward reasonable German proposals. It was to be gathered from Mr. Roden Buxton's reply that, although he was a member of the Labour Party, he did not at all approve of this policy. That exactly was why he had come to see me. The antagonisms had become so acute that strictly speaking there was only one alternative: either war or a reasonable understanding. Mr. Roden Buxton then sketched the following plan:

Great Britain would express her willingness to conclude an agreement with Germany for a delimitation of spheres of interest. By delimitation of spheres of interest he meant, on the one hand, non-interference of other Powers in these spheres, and, on the other, a warrant to the beneficiary Great Power to prevent States situated in its sphere of interest from pursuing a policy hostile to it. In concrete application, this would mean:

- 1) Germany promises not to interfere in British Empire affairs.
- 2) Great Britain promises fully to respect the German spheres of interest in Eastern and Southeastern Europe. A consequence of this would be that Great Britain would renounce the guarantees she gave to certain States in the German sphere of interest. Great Britain further promises to influence France to break her alliance with the Soviet Union and to give up her ties in Southeastern Europe.

- 3) Great Britain promises to give up the present negotiations for a pact with the Soviet Union. Strangely enough, Mr. Roden Buxton also mentioned in this connection the dropping of the Czech-Soviet treaty.

In return for this, beside the afore-mentioned non-interference, Germany is to promise:

- 1) To proclaim her readiness for European co-operation (in this connection Mr. Roden Buxton expressed ideas similar to Mussolini's four-power pact);
- 2) To grant at a later stage some kind of autonomy to Bohemia and Moravia (I pointed out that this cultural autonomy already existed, after which Mr. Roden Buxton did not pursue the idea);
- 3) To agree to a general reduction of armaments. Such a reduction of armaments was in no case to be demanded one-sidedly of Germany; the thing to be achieved was to prevent all the nations from completely ruining themselves by expenditure on armaments. In reply to my question, Roden Buxton said that the armament potential¹ of the States might remain the same, only on a lower level, just as if a family which had lived on the fifth floor of a modern apartment house were—in order to economize rent—to content itself with equal space on the second floor. Such a concession was essential to make it at all possible for Chamberlain and Lord Halifax to enter into reasonable and realistic negotiations with us.

It was obvious that such a far-reaching program, which would also settle the colonial question in a manner favour-

¹ "Das Rüstungspotentiale."

able to Germany, could only be discussed quite confidentially and in an atmosphere of improved confidence.

On the whole, I maintained the attitude of a listener, but in the end referred in an emphatic manner to the speeches of the Führer, who had long ago warned Britain not to interfere in matters which did not concern her.

In conclusion, I asked Mr. Roden Buxton whether he had discussed his ideas with members of the British Government. Mr. Roden Buxton evaded a direct answer. I believe however that it may be deduced from his rather roundabout statements that Sir Horace Wilson, and consequently Prime Minister Chamberlain also, are occupied with similar thoughts. It is not precluded that Mr. Roden Buxton wanted to put out a feeler. I however got the impression that Mr. Roden Buxton's views are based upon a thorough study of the matter.

Signed: *Th. Kordt*

London, July 31, 1939

No. 23

MINUTE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN AND LORD KEMSLEY

Copy for the Ambassador

MEMO

Lord Kemsley, with whom I took tea today, told me the following about his impressions of his trip to Germany:

He spent one day in Berlin, was invited to breakfast by Reichsleiter Rosenberg, then motored via Leipzig to Bayreuth and on the way visited a labour camp, attended the performance of "Parsifal," during the intermission was introduced, together with his wife, to the Führer and then had more than an hour's talk with the Führer. He also had a lengthy conversation with Reichsminister Goebbels, and then returned to England via Ostend.

Lord Kemsley was greatly impressed with the enthusiasm (keenness) of all the German public men he met, down to the minor officials; he named in particular Gauleiter Waechtler, who showed him the construction work in Nuremberg. He said repeatedly that this had made

a very deep impression on him. Then he said very emphatically that it was simply impossible to think that the German and British nations might be involved in war.

On the subject of his conversation with the Führer he was rather reticent. He said that the Führer had allowed him plenty of time and that he had had the opportunity to state the British point of view at length. He had described the prevailing state of mind here and had agreed with the Führer that a dangerous state of tension existed and that an attempt must be made to break it. He had also explained to the Führer that, just as a declaration of war by Chamberlain in the House of Commons would meet with the unanimous approval of Parliament, so an announcement by Chamberlain that he considered an agreement with Germany imminent and feasible would be greeted with similar approval. He had the impression that the Führer looked very vigorous and healthy.

Lord Kemsley spoke with pleasure of his conversation with Reichsleiter Rosenberg (charming personality),¹ to whom he had said that Chamberlain was in his way the Führer of England, similar to Hitler and Mussolini. This had visibly made an impression upon Rosenberg.

He was also strongly impressed by the personality of Reichsminister Goebbels, whom he thought a clever and broadly educated man.

He naturally had long conversations with Reich Press Chief Dr. Dietrich. The latter told him that this was not the proper political moment for the originally contemplated exchange of newspaper articles, and that it would be better to wait for a politically more favourable time, which would probably come soon. Lord Kemsley did not seem to disagree

with this argument and showed no particular displeasure at the postponement.

He also said that he had been invited to the Party Congress, but did not know yet whether he would have the time to avail himself of the invitation.

[Dirksen]

London, August 2, 1939

1. For Herr Kordt,
2. For Herr von Welck,
3. For Dr. Hesse,
for their information.
4. For the files.

¹ The words in parentheses are in English.

No. 24

**REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO THE
GERMAN FOREIGN OFFICE INCLOSING
A MINUTE OF A CONVERSATION WITH
SIR HORACE WILSON**

Copy for the Ambassador
London, August 3, 1939
Strictly Secret

A.3186

1 copy

1 inclosure (in triplicate).

Foreign Office,
Berlin

POLITICAL REPORT

Re: Minute of a Conversation with Sir Horace Wilson

With reference to my earlier telegraphic reports of 31.7—No. 277,¹ and of 1.8—No. 278,² I inclose herewith a minute of a conversation I had with Sir Horace Wilson on August 3.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

¹ See Document No. 18.

² See Document No. 21.

INCLOSURE TO REPORT OF AUGUST 3, 1939—A.3186

Strictly Secret

MINUTE
OF A CONVERSATION WITH SIR HORACE WILSON
on August 3, 1939

I

After it was ascertained in Herr Kordt's conversation with Mr. Butler that Sir Horace Wilson in supplement to his conversation with Herr Wohlthat would very much like to have a talk with me, it was arranged that I should visit him today at his home at 4 o'clock. The conversation took place and lasted nearly two hours.

II

I set worth on having Sir Horace Wilson confirm the notes which I had made on the basis of my talks with Herr Wohlthat regarding his conversations with Sir Horace Wilson. It seemed to me essential to have this corroboration in order that there might be full clarity on these important points, all the more that since Hudson's indiscretion a new campaign had been started against Chamberlain's appeasement policy. It appeared that the basis of the Wohlthat-Wilson conversation remained in force. Sir Horace Wilson confirmed that he had suggested to Herr Wohlthat the following program of negotiations:

1) Conclusion of a treaty of "non-aggression," in which both sides would obligate themselves to renounce unilateral aggressive action as a method of their policy. The inherent

intention of the British Government regarding this point was explained to me by Sir Horace Wilson when in the course of the conversation I asked how agreement with Germany could be reconciled with the British Government's encirclement policy. To this he replied that an Anglo-German agreement involving renunciation of aggression vis-à-vis third Powers would completely absolve the British Government from the commitments to which it was now pledged by the guarantees to Poland, Turkey, etc.; these commitments were assumed only against the event of attack, and were so formulated. With the removal of the danger the commitments would also cease to be operative.

2) An Anglo-German declaration to the effect that both Powers wanted to ease (improve)¹ the political situation, in order to make it possible to co-operate in improving the world economic situation.

3) Negotiations with a view to increasing foreign trade.

4) Negotiations regarding Germany's economic interests in the Southeast.

5) Negotiations regarding raw materials. Sir Horace Wilson stressed that this was to include the colonial question. It was not expedient at the present moment to go deeper into this matter, for it was a very delicate question. It was enough to stipulate that the colonial question would be discussed.

6) A non-intervention agreement. Sir Horace Wilson said that the declaration required from the German side was already contained in the Führer's speech of April 28. The English side would be prepared to make a declaration of non-intervention in respect to Greater Germany (Greater Reich).² This would embrace the Danzig question, for

¹ The word in parentheses, "improve," is in English.

² The words in parentheses, "Greater Reich," are in English.

example. Sir Horace Wilson avoided being as explicit regarding Germany's sphere of interest as he had been in his conversation with Herr Wohlthat, or as Mr. Roden Buxton had been in his conversation with Herr Kordt, although it was to be gathered from what he said that the German demand could be discussed in connection with this point of the program.

7) Armaments.¹ On this point Sir Horace Wilson said that he wanted to make it quite clear that it was not disarmament that was meant, but negotiations regarding armaments in general. It was apparent from the further course of the conversation that he was well aware of the difficulties that would attend any agreement for limitation of armaments, as well as of the fact that it would take years to get going and become effective.

8) I took advantage of this opportunity to ask Sir Horace Wilson to tell me how the newspaper rumours that Mr. Hudson had held out the prospect of a big "disarmament loan" had originated, since Herr Wohlthat had made no mention of it to me. Sir Horace Wilson said that it had been often discussed how the financial and economic difficulties which it was to be feared might attend armament limitation could be overcome. Hudson had perhaps seized upon this idea and enlarged upon it. But the question was now closed and was no longer being considered. He personally believed that in that event² there would be a period of 3-6 months in which financial difficulties would arise, but chiefly in the sphere of currency technique.

¹ The German word "Rüstungen" is followed by the English word "armaments" in parentheses.

² In the event of disarmament, presumably.

After recapitulating his conversation with Wohlthat, Sir Horace Wilson expatiated at length on the great risk Chamberlain would incur by starting confidential negotiations with the German Government. If anything about them were to leak out there would be a grand scandal, and Chamberlain would probably be forced to resign. Labour Member Dalton had already referred in the House of Commons yesterday to the rumours that Chamberlain was making new "appeasement moves," and he, Wilson, had himself just received an anonymous letter warning him and Chamberlain against such manoeuvres.

When I questioned whether in general, in view of the prevailing state of feeling—everyone who came out in favour of adjustment with Germany was regarded as a traitor and branded as such—it was possible for a British Government to arrive at any binding agreements with Germany, Sir Horace Wilson replied that it was possible, but that it would require all the skill of the British persons involved not to come to grief in the attempt. Above all, the greatest secrecy was necessary at the present stage. The question was, how and in what form the public were later to be informed of the Government's plans. Here Wilson pointed out that in England—whether rightly or wrongly he would not say—confidence in Germany and her peaceful intentions had been shattered; the thing above all was to convince the British public that confidence was warranted. Then there was the fear that in the next few weeks or months developments might occur which would precipitate a new crisis. The British Government had information that two million German troops were shortly to be called to the colours; that manoeuvres menacing to Poland, with the participation of large numbers of aircraft, were to be held

on the Polish frontier; bearing further in mind the statement recently made by Reichsminister Goebbels regarding the continuation of the war of nerves, a situation might arise in which further negotiations would have little prospect of success. There would be no sense in negotiating for an adjustment if another dangerous crisis was to be expected. It had to be admitted that it was a sort of vicious circle: on the one hand, the public could not be reassured by announcing that negotiations were in prospect (because that would jeopardize the negotiations), and, on the other, the German side declined to make reassuring declarations before they had a clear picture regarding the negotiations. It was difficult, because of Britain's democratic constitution, for Chamberlain to come out publicly with a conciliatory statement, for then he and the Cabinet would probably be forced to resign. The vicious circle could therefore perhaps be more easily broken if the Führer, who had no political attacks to fear at home, took the initiative and himself made such a conciliatory statement. He could do this all the more because he was not only a great, but also a successful statesman who, in the knowledge of his strength and achievements, could say the word without endangering his prestige or fearing internal upheavals.

I replied to this that the extensive manoeuvres projected by Germany were by no means comparable to the military measures of other Powers: in the past four months the Poles had mobilized a million men and were standing on our frontiers (Sir Horace questioned whether the number was so large, but offered no objection to the figure 900,000); Britain's armed forces, land, naval and air, were more or less mobilized; France had taken comprehensive mobilization measures. It was therefore impossible to expect us to reverse our measures or to cancel the manoeuvres.

Sir Horace Wilson protested that he had not had this in mind; there were however substantially different ways of holding manoeuvres: they could be arranged in such a manner as to lead the other side to regard them as a direct threat and challenge, or they could be arranged as ordinary peacetime manoeuvres.

I went on to say that on the question of deceived confidence our view entirely differed from the British; at any rate, it was a fact that it had been the aim of British policy in the past months to build up a regular world coalition against Germany, and that to this day it was preparing the individual members of the coalition financially and militarily for eventual action against Germany. We must know for certain how the British Government reconciled this policy with the possibility of an adjustment with Germany. The Führer would certainly not consider making pacifying or friendly declarations unless he knew what attitude he could expect from the British side toward Germany's justified demands.

In reply to this Sir Horace Wilson made the statement already mentioned regarding the British encirclement policy, that it would become inoperative if a treaty of non-aggression were concluded with Germany. As to the question of how far the Führer must be certain concerning the concessions the British side were to make before he, so to speak, could hold out the palm of peace, here too the difficulty was that there must first be concrete results; it must however be a certain assurance to the German side that they definitely know what the program of negotiations is to be; the British side were prepared to discuss all points proposed by the German side. How far agreement would be possible it was still too early to say.

The conversation then turned on the question, in what form the talks begun with Herr Wohlthat should be con-

tinued, assuming there was the desire on the German side to continue them. Sir Horace Wilson said that it would be a severe disappointment to the British side if we did not take up the thread. In that case there would be nothing left but to drive to disaster (heading on to the catastrophe).¹ It would therefore be of great interest to him to know how his conversation with Wohlthat was received in Berlin.

I replied that I could tell him nothing definitely on this score. I myself could not clearly picture how, from the purely technical aspect, the continuation of the conversations was possible; for example, owing to Hudson's indiscretion, another visit of Herr Wohlthat to London was out of the question.

Sir Horace Wilson believed that a way could be found; it could be discussed when the time came. Probably the two emissaries could meet in Switzerland or elsewhere.

IV

From the conversation sketched above there gradually emerged certain definite points, which Sir Horace Wilson summarized as follows:

1) What instructions has the Führer given respecting further action on the Wohlthat report, and what are the views of the German Government regarding the next steps that ought to be taken?

2) Will it be possible for the Führer, as far as it depends upon him, so to determine developments in the next few weeks as not to lead to any exacerbation of the situation?

¹ The words in parentheses are in English.

3) Assuming that the problem and the individual points to be discussed have been determined, how could the Führer make known his decision to take the initiative in creating an atmosphere in which the negotiations program could be discussed with prospect of success?

To my question, what was the British preliminary contribution which justified such a preliminary contribution from the German side, Sir Horace Wilson replied that the British Government had manifested its good will and initiative by discussing the afore-mentioned points with Herr Wohlthat and had thereby made known to the German Government its readiness to negotiate.

It was to be inferred from all that Sir Horace Wilson said that he regarded the program of negotiations he had suggested to Herr Wohlthat, and now confirmed to me, as an official British feeler, to which a German reply was now expected. It was quite clear that the British side are deeply concerned about the difficult predicament in which the British Government finds itself, that is, into which it has manoeuvred itself. On the one hand, there is the excited state of public opinion which it has whipped up against Germany by its policy and agitation, and, on the other, there is the wish, by means of an adjustment with Germany, to avoid war, which otherwise is regarded as inevitable. The concern that this may damage its encirclement policy seemed to me to hold a secondary place; the dominant feeling was that, compared with an effective adjustment with Germany, the ties that had been formed in the last few months with other Powers were only a subsidiary means, which would cease to be operative as soon as agreement with Germany, the all-important objective worth striving for, had been really attained. The bringing in of France and Italy likewise played a secondary role in the conversation. Sir Horace Wilson said casually that the agreement

should be made between Germany and Britain, and that, naturally, if it were thought desirable, Italy and France could be brought in.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

London, August 3, 1939

No. 25

MINUTE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN
AND LORD HALIFAX

Copy for the Ambassador
Secret

MINUTE
OF A CONVERSATION WITH LORD HALIFAX
on August 9, 1939

After I had informed Lord Halifax of the purpose of my visit—to say good-bye before going on leave—he began to speak of the situation in Danzig and asked whether I had any explanation for the sharper tone of the press on both sides. I answered in the affirmative, referred to the provocative article in the “Czas,” and added that apart from this the German side was undoubtedly concerned and embittered by the statement of the Polish Commissioner-General, Chodacki, who had told League of Nations Commissioner Burckardt that if the customs frontier between Danzig and East Prussia were opened it would mean war. This furnished further confirmation that the fear that peace might be jeopardized at any moment by the local Polish authorities was well founded.

Lord Halifax replied that I could be certain that he and the British Government would do their utmost to incline

the Poles to moderation. He was moreover convinced that neither Beck nor Rydz-Smigly desired a conflict with Germany.

I retorted that a multiplicity of political declarations and views had always been Poland's inherent weakness; such was the case now. The peaceable disposition of certain individuals was countered by the belligerent tendencies of other political groups.

In reply to Lord Halifax's remark that it would be highly desirable that both sides display moderation, so that tranquillity might be achieved and the opportunity opened for agreement by means of negotiations, I said that we for our part had amply manifested calm and moderation, as, for instance, in the behaviour of the Senate¹ in the past few days, and in the denials with which we had countered alarmist reports in the world press.

I further explained to Lord Halifax that the dangerous world situation was due less to the inevitability of an imminent violent outbreak, than to the fact that the possibility of resolving antagonisms by means of negotiation was blocked on all sides. The Danzig complex had been rendered practically unamenable to negotiations by Chamberlain's declarations of July 12 narrowing the scope of the problem, quite apart from the attitude of Poland and the excited state of the world press caused by false information. Pacification of the world situation had generally been rendered impossible by the erection of the non-aggression front, the continuous succession of disquieting news of the dispatch of military commissions² to Poland or to Moscow, or by news of the financial strengthening of potential adversaries of Germany. It went without saying that we were watching

¹ I. e., of Danzig.

² “Militärkommissionen.”

these developments attentively and resolutely and drawing our conclusions. Lastly, the problem of Anglo-German relations was blocked by the fact that British public opinion retorted to every attempt at adjustment on the part of the British Government with an indignant outcry that this was treason.

Lord Halifax thereupon repeated his already well-known standpoint that confidence, especially of the British people, had been badly shaken by the German march into Prague, for which, as for other unexpected German acts, there was doubtless much to be said, and that until feeling became calmer or confidence were restored, this state of tension was bound to continue. The Führer was the only man in the world who could restore confidence by, as it were, giving the signal for an improvement of the atmosphere. He, Halifax, had endeavoured to set forth the essence of Britain's policy in his speech at Chatham House, and apparently with success, because he had received many expressions of approval from all parts of the country. British policy was pursuing a twofold objective; on the one hand, to prevent further acts of aggression by building up a group of Powers, and, on the other, to improve relations with Germany by discussing her demands and claims by way of negotiation. He was certain that once the ice were broken, the British side would go very far to reach an adjustment with Germany.

In the further course of the conversation, Lord Halifax said that he would now like to give me an exact picture of his ideas and views as they had stood after Munich and what changes they had since undergone. After Munich he had been persuaded that fifty years of world peace was now assured roughly on the following basis: Germany the dominant power on the continent, with predominant rights in Southeastern Europe, particularly in the field of commer-

cial policy; Britain would engage only in moderate trade in that area; in Western Europe, Britain and France protected from conflicts with Germany by the lines of fortification on both sides and endeavouring to retain and develop their possessions by defensive means; friendship with America; friendship with Portugal; Spain for the time being an indefinite factor which for the next few years at least would necessarily have to hold aloof from all combinations of powers; Russia an out-of-the-way, vast and scarcely surveyable territory; Britain bent on safeguarding her Mediterranean communications with the dominions and the Far East, via Aden, Colombo and Singapore. Then came the march into Prague, which changed everything, and above all destroyed the idea that world stability had been attained. Then doubt arose as to where Germany would stop, if at all, and the desire to create safeguards against further surprises.

I replied that naturally these developments looked entirely different from the German aspect; I would not say how often our confidence had been deceived and what sad experiences had compelled us to rely upon our own swift decisions instead of upon negotiations. I was familiar with Lord Halifax's view of his, that is the British, policy, but on the other hand he must place himself in the mental position of a German statesman. All the latter saw was that an ever bigger coalition was being formed against Germany and that the war potential vis-à-vis Germany was constantly changing and growing to Germany's disfavour. At best, Britain's policy could be compared to that of a man who throws a net over the head of another and tells him that if he keeps quiet nothing will happen to him, but that as soon as he moves he will suffer for it. It was not surprising that Germany, on closer examination, was rather sceptical of the declarations of British statesmen that they were

willing to consider Germany's demands voluntarily and by way of negotiation. Nor could I consider the constant references to shattered confidence justified. Confidence and belief in the honesty of a contractual partner only arise in the course of long business relations which do not bring disillusionment. But this should not preclude the confidence which is necessary for the conclusion of a contract; this confidence comes from knowledge of one's own strength. Britain, by virtue of the combination of powers standing behind her, could certainly muster this confidence. Instead, public opinion becomes extremely excited every time Anglo-German talks are undertaken with a view to an adjustment of Anglo-German relations, if only in the economic field, as was the case with the Wohlthat-Hudson conversation. This seemed to me to show that on the English side, especially in view of the democratic system and the untutored behaviour of the press, the premises for a peaceful settlement did not exist.¹

Lord Halifax explained to me that if Chamberlain were to get up in the House of Commons and declare that in view of definite German actions there was no alternative but war, Parliament would unanimously support him; but Parliament would similarly support him if he were to declare that he saw the possibility for an adjustment with Germany. Fundamentally, every Englishman wanted such an adjustment. He had recently, at a garden party at his country seat, talked with many miners and their trade union secretaries. They all told him that the Labour opposition in the House of Commons did not represent the real opinion of the working man. This was also shown by the Prime Minister's visit to South Wales; this was a difficult area, nevertheless the Prime Minister received a really enthusiastic welcome.

¹ In the original the last three sentences are deleted in pencil.

He, Halifax, had also convinced himself that the miners with whom he spoke understood and shared the policy of the Government no more aggression and the wish for a peaceful settlement of existing difficulties.¹ He had to agree with me that public opinion was at present highly excited and distrustful of negotiations with Germany. The difficulties I had mentioned were indeed for the time being unsolvable. But it was equally certain that a period of calm making for the pacification of public opinion would create an entirely different picture, and then it would undoubtedly be possible to discuss appeasement questions. The British Government keenly desired that this should come about, and then it would be prepared to go very far for the achievement of this aim.

Signed: *von Dirksen*

London, August 9, 1939

1. For Herr Kordt,
for his information.
2. For the files in
a closed envelope.

¹ In the original a full stop has been put in pencil after the word "Government" and the end of the sentence, "no more aggression . . . difficulties," deleted.

No. 26

**MINUTE OF A CONVERSATION BETWEEN
GERMAN AMBASSADOR TO LONDON DIRKSEN
AND ITALIAN AMBASSADOR TO BERLIN
ATTOLICO**

Secret

**MINUTE
OF A CONVERSATION WITH AMBASSADOR ATTOLICO¹**

During my stay in Berlin, on August 15, I visited, without preliminary announcement, the Italian Ambassador, Attolico, with whom I have been on close terms of friendship ever since we were both together in Moscow. He asked me to wait a few minutes, because he had a visitor, and then he would have plenty of time for me. While I was waiting, he became engaged, as I observed, in an urgent telephone conversation. He then told me, immediately after our exchange of greetings, that he had just received a telephone instruction from Rome to go there immediately to report. Signor Attolico, who seemed to be very excited and disturbed, then told me without any preliminaries that he must talk to me as man to man, as friend to friend; there are moments when this must be done. In the negotiations with Ciano decisions had been taken that might easily re-

¹ The date is not given.

Aufzeichnung
über eine Unterhaltung mit Botschafter Attolico

GERM.

Während meines Aufenthalts in Berlin suchte ich am 15.8. unangemeldet den mit dem gemeinsamen Aufenthalt in Moskau her freundschaftlich verbundenen italienischen Botschafter Attolico auf. Er ließ mich bitten, einige Minuten zu warten, da er Besuch habe; er habe dann reichlich Zeit für mich. Während ich wartete, merkte ich, daß ein dringendes Telefongespräch eingegangen sei. Herr Attolico sagte mir dann auch, gleich nach der Begrüßung, daß er solchen telefonischen Weisung aus Rom bekommen habe, sofort zur Berichterstattung dorthin zu kommen. Herr Attolico, der sehr bewegt und erregt schien, sagte dann ohne weitere Einleitung: er müsse zu mir als Mensch zum Menschen, als Freund zum Freunde sprechen; es gäbe Augenblicke, wo man das tun müsse. Bei den Besprechungen mit Ciano seien Beschlüsse gefaßt worden, die leicht einen Krieg zur Folge haben könnten, und zwar einen Krieg mit Polen. Man sei dabei von der unzutreffenden Voraussetzung ausgegangen, daß England nicht mitmachen werde. Ich gab mit einigen Worten meinem Zweifel an der Richtigkeit dieser Darstellung Ausdruck, da eine Teilnahme Englands bei einem solchen Konfliktfall sicherlich in Betracht gezogen worden wäre. Herr Attolico blieb aber bei seiner Ansicht und fuhr fort, ich müßte die maßgebenden Stellen zu einer anderen Überzeugung bringen. Ich erwiderte, daß sei gerade in meinem Griff, meine Berichte zu erstatten.

Die ganze Unterhaltung dauerte kaum 5 Minuten; Herr Attolico war ebenso erregt wie eilig und war der fast ausschließlich Sprechende. Ich beschränkte mich darauf, einige kurze Zwischenbemerkungen zu machen, um die Behauptungen nicht unwidersprochen zu lassen, daß der Krieg mit Polen unvermeidlich sei und daß deutscherseits hierbei der Faktor England unberücksichtigt gelassen worden sei.

Attolico

Photostatic copy of Document No. 26

sult in war, namely, with Poland. The decisions had been based on the mistaken assumption that England would not join in. I expressed in a few words my doubt as to the correctness of this account, since British participation in the event of such a conflict would certainly have been taken into consideration. Signor Attolico however stuck to his position and said that it was my duty to change the opinion of the leading authorities. I replied that I was just on the point of presenting my reports.

Our whole conversation scarcely lasted five minutes; Signor Attolico was as excited as he was in a hurry, and he did practically all the talking. I confined myself to throwing in a few brief remarks, in order not to leave uncontested the assertion that war with Poland was inevitable and that Germany had left the British factor out of account.

*Dirksen*¹

¹ Signed by Dirksen personally.

No. 27

LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
TO LONDON DIRKSEN TO SECRETARY
OF STATE IN THE GERMAN FOREIGN
OFFICE WEIZSÄCKER
INCLOSING A MEMORANDUM ON BRITAIN'S
PROBABLE ATTITUDE IN THE EVENT
OF A GERMAN-POLISH CONFLICT

Gröditzberg, Kreis Goldberg, Silesia,
August 19, 1939

Personal and Confidential

Dear Herr von Weizsäcker,

Our last conversation in Berlin has led me to the decision to set forth my views on the attitude of Britain in the event of a German-Polish conflict in a memorandum for Herr von Ribbentrop. This will probably be more effective in achieving my aim of securing a hearing than if I were to write *again* to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs requesting him to receive me.

I therefore inclose the memorandum and request you to forward it to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs if you have no reservations as to its contents. If you have, I should be thankful if you would inform me. I hope how-

¹ The original is a typewritten text, corrected and signed in Dirksen's hand.

ever that you will agree, as I have endeavoured—in the consciousness of my responsibility—to express my views with the utmost clarity and deliberation.

Lastly, I would be thankful if your office would make the necessary number of copies and forward one of them to the Embassy in London. I have not made the copies myself owing to lack of technical facilities here, and for the sake of greater expedition.

I have not decided anything regarding what you communicated to me by telephone yesterday, since I am not acquainted with the substance of the statements ascribed to me, and with the best will in the world do not know what exception could be taken to the few words I uttered in this conversation, which barely lasted five minutes.¹

With best wishes and Heil Hitler,

Always yours,

Dirksen

¹ After the words "with the best will in the world do not know," the letter originally continued as follows, but this passage has been struck out: "what exception can be taken to them. When A[ttolico] told me that our people did not believe that in the event of a conflict Britain would join in, I merely expressed in a few words my doubt as to the correctness of this information, since this highly probable possibility must certainly have been taken into consideration by us. And when A. added that I must make the real state of affairs clear, I said that I would naturally present my report. The whole conversation barely lasted five minutes." See the minute of Dirksen's conversation with Attolico, Document No. 26.

INCLOSURE

*Gröditzberg, Silesia,
August 18, 1939
Secret*

MEMORANDUM

ON BRITAIN'S PROBABLE ATTITUDE IN THE EVENT OF A GERMAN-POLISH CONFLICT

I. In view of the growing tension in German-Polish relations, the question of the probable attitude of Britain in the event of a German-Polish conflict assumes increasing importance. The answer to this question must be based upon an analysis of the reasons which prompted Great Britain to enter into so close an alliance with Poland.

II. The foreign policy considerations that motivated this alliance are known and need only be summarized in salient form: the keen concern which Britain already felt in the years 1933-36 over Germany's growing strength was further enhanced by the Austrian Anschluss and the return of the Sudetenland to the Reich. The outcome of Munich was taken as a diplomatic defeat. After the incorporation of Bohemia and Moravia in March of this year, the growing apprehensions that Britain's world position was being threatened ripened the decision to resist any further unilateral actions changing the balance of power in favour of Germany. This was to be achieved by means of a new variation of the old conception of collective security, under the new label of the "formation of a front of non-aggression"—in other words, by an encirclement of Germany. Poland, which a lying press campaign, in March, depicted as the next "victim" of German "aggression," has become the corner-

stone of this non-aggression front. As long as Britain adheres to the encirclement policy, she must regard the honouring of her guarantees to Poland as a matter upon which her reputation in foreign affairs very largely depends.

III. Besides considerations of foreign policy, there are other important factors, of a psychological nature, which influence Britain's attitude toward Poland. The long series of diplomatic defeats suffered by Britain in the past years (East Asia, Abyssinia, Spain, Austria, Munich, Bohemia-Moravia, collapse of the League of Nations policy) had an increasingly depressing effect on Britain's self-opinion. The abandonment of the Negus, Schuschnigg and Beneš gradually came to be taken as evidences of moral inferiority, which must make Britain appear weak, unreliable and unworthy of political credit in the eyes of the world. The foreign policy jerk which followed the new orientation of British policy after March 15, was accompanied by a moral jerk. Britain now wants through her newly assumed commitments to demonstrate her fidelity to treaties, her strength, and her political good name. And she also wants to overcome her own inferiority complex. This is the underlying reason for the continual, almost hysterical reiteration by Chamberlain and other British statesmen of the thesis that if Danzig is annexed by Germany against Poland's will—not to mention further re-incorporation of former German territories—Great Britain will not remain a passive onlooker and will have to regard it as a *casus foederis*. Danzig is consequently a point at which the British public stares hypnotically and as though obsessed by an *idée fixe*.

It is important to take these psychological factors into consideration, because they permit deductions to be made as to what Britain's attitude will be in the further course of development of German-Polish relations.

IV. There is another factor, lying outside the sphere of foreign relations, which plays a big role in Britain's attitude toward the complex of German-Polish problems—namely, that Britain is ignorant of Poland's true character. The knowledge which, owing to the fact that they have for centuries been neighbours of the Polish State, the Germans have gained of its fragility, its megalomania, its lust for conquest and its ruthless oppression of national minorities has for various reasons been a closed book to the British: because of their innate disinclination to study the conditions and ways of thought of other nations; because of their present obstinate attitude toward all arguments in favour of Germany's claims; and, lastly, because during the five years' truce in the German-Polish dispute—1934-39—the wrongs inflicted upon the German minority could not be made use of with all due emphasis. That is why the British public is at present reserved and distrustful of the reports from Germany and Danzig of the outrageous acts of Polish violence, and is inclined to give Poland the benefit of the doubt.

V. On the basis of the above exposition of the ponderable and emotional factors that influence Britain's attitude toward the complex of German-Polish problems, it can now be considered what the probable attitude of Britain would be in a German-Polish conflict.

1) It is necessary to state as a general preliminary remark that Great Britain has not pledged herself 100 per cent to support Poland in *any*¹ conflict. This would be contrary to the British disposition always to leave a possible loophole. Hence the stipulation that for Britain a *casus foederis* would arise only if Poland's independence is threatened. This assures a certain amount of elasticity. It is also assert-

¹ Underscored in the original.

ed, but has not yet been proved, that Poland has obligated herself to obtain Britain's consent before taking to arms. This would mean that Britain would have a free hand should Poland declare war of her own accord.

Little though the likelihood is that Britain would *automatically*¹ become involved in a German-Polish conflict over Danzig or the Corridor, it would be mistaken to borrow the statement of the question as given in the article of the French politician Déat, "Why Die for Danzig?"² and apply it to Britain. This would be to ignore the essence of the problem. Britain is not vitally interested in the fate of Danzig, but she is vitally interested in proving that she honours her political promissory notes.

2) From what has been said in 1), it follows that the question whether Britain will interfere in a German-Polish conflict cannot be answered by a plain yes or no. Rather, it is necessary to examine individual cases and to endeavour to determine what Britain's position would be in each case. The possible cases are as follows:

a) Danzig announces—by Senate decision or by plebiscite—its return to the Reich. Poland does not retaliate with military action. There is no fighting, or at most only local skirmishes. In this case Britain would hold aloof.

b) If Poland retaliates to a Senate decision to "return to the bosom of the Reich" with military invasion, and declares that the moment has come for the fulfilment of allied obligations, Britain, in conformity with Chamberlain's and Halifax's repeated declarations, would render Poland military assistance.

c) If the Polish side should stage a provocation—such as the shelling of a German village by a Polish battery com-

¹ Underscored in the original.

² "Pourquoi mourir pour Dantzig?"

mander run amok, or the bombing of German inhabited places by Polish airmen—it would be of decisive importance in the determination of Britain's attitude, first, that the rights and wrongs of the case shall be clear and incontestable in the eyes of the world, and, second, that British public opinion shall have time to form a clear judgment of the rights and wrongs of the matter and to convince itself that Poland is alone to blame. Otherwise, there will be the danger that, owing to the prejudice against Germany, Britain will side with Poland and, should military action ensue, will respond to Poland's appeal for help (cf. the remarks in IV).

d) Should Germany from any military considerations—e.g., in order to forestall an attack believed to be planned by Poland—feel herself forced to take military action against Poland, the fact would have to be reckoned with that Britain would come to Poland's aid. Nor is it likely that Britain would remain neutral if in such a war with Germany Poland were very soon defeated. Here too Britain would make her decision, not from considerations of Poland's weal or woe but from the consideration of safeguarding her world position.

VI. The above-mentioned attitude of Britain toward Poland and the complex of German-Polish problems is not a constant magnitude, invariable for all time. In spite of its outward rigidity, the Anglo-Polish alliance is constantly liable to change. This has already been demonstrated in the few months of its existence. The more Britain is drawn into the serpentine paths of Eastern politics, the more she becomes the prey of doubt and misgiving. Poland's insatiable need of money has already led to a partial disruption of the financial negotiations. The insolent tone of the Polish press, although carefully hushed up in the British press, meets with disapproval in high quarters. Poland's military strength

proves on closer examination to be dubious. It is gradually being recognized that the exceptional difficulties of Russo-Polish relations lessen the value of Poland as an ally. Britain's Eastern policy is still in a state of flux, if only because of the continuing negotiations with the Soviet Union. This is contributed to by the fact that the state of relations with Germany is not yet regarded by the British side as definitely elucidated. Determination to refute the growing opinion that Britain is decadent, unreliable and weak must be regarded as a constant factor in Britain's general attitude. And precisely in her attitude toward Poland will Britain continue for the time being to be guided by these considerations.

*von Dirksen*¹

Submitted to the
Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs
through the Secretary of State

¹ Signed by Dirksen personally.

No. 28

LETTER FROM WOHLTHAT TO GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN

Berlin W 8, August 25, 1939
Leipziger Strasse, 3

PRESIDENT OF THE COUNCIL OF MINISTERS
FIELD-MARSHAL GOERING
COMMISSIONER
FOR THE FOUR-YEAR PLAN

Ministerialdirektor
For Special Assignments
Wohlthat¹
W. XX/730

Highly esteemed Herr von Dirksen,

When you were kind enough during your stay in Berlin to get in touch with my office I was still away on leave. I should like to inform you, in case of necessity, that I have now returned. The report which I sent at the time to the Field-Marshal was, I am told, forwarded to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. When you were requested to make a telegraphic report, I begged Secretary of State von Weizsäcker to acquaint you with my report, since it had been impossible in the short time at my disposal in London to leave you a written minute in confirmation of my oral communication.

¹Letterhead.

Ministerpräsident Generalfeldmarschall Göring
Beauftragter für den Vierjahresplan
Ministerialdirektor zur besonderen Verwendung
Schlichtel

Berlin W 8, den 25. August 1939
Anlagen Nr. 4
Genref. 12 6541.127371

W. XX/730.

Sehr verehrter Herr von Dirksen!

Als Sie so freundlich waren, sich während Ihres Berliner Aufenthaltes mit meinem Büro in Verbindung zu setzen, war ich noch auf Urlaub. Inzwischen bin ich wieder zurückgekehrt, was ich Ihnen auf alle Fälle mitteilen möchte. Der Bericht, den ich seinerzeit an den Herrn Generalfeldmarschall gerichtet habe, ist, wie ich höre, an den Herrn Reichsaussenminister geleitet worden. Als Sie zum telegraphischen Bericht aufgefordert wurden, habe ich Herrn Staatssekretär von Weizsäcker gebeten, dass Sie von meinem Bericht in Kenntnis gesetzt wurden, da es in der Kürze der Zeit in London damals nicht möglich war, daß ich Ihnen zur Bestätigung meines mündlichen Berichtes eine schriftliche Aufzeichnung hinterließe.

Mein Bericht ist mehr als allgemeines Stimmungsbild betrachtet worden. Die meritorische Behandlung der aufgeworfenen Fragen sollte sich auf Ihren Bericht stützen.

Es würde mich sehr freuen, bald die Lage mit Ihnen wieder besprechen zu können.

Mit den besten Grüßen und

Heil Hitler!

bleibe ich

sehr

Wohlthat.

Photostatic copy of Document No. 28

My report was taken rather as a general picture of the state of feeling. The questions raised in it were to be discussed on their merits on the basis of your report.

I should be very glad of an early opportunity to discuss the situation with you again.

With best wishes and

Heil Hitler!

I remain,

Always yours,

*Wohlthat*¹

¹ Signed by Wohlthat personally.

No. 29

DIRKSEN'S SURVEY OF HIS AMBASSADORSHIP IN LONDON

Secret

MEMORANDUM ON THE DEVELOPMENT OF POLITICAL RELATIONS BETWEEN GERMANY AND BRITAIN DURING MY MISSION IN LONDON,

May 1938-August 1939

- I. May 1938—Munich.
- II. Munich-Prague.
- III. Prague.
- IV. May 1939—Outbreak of War.
 - 1) Encirclement Policy in Full Blast.
 - 2) Growing Counteraction to the Encirclement Policy.
 - 3) Ways of Relaxing the Tension.
 - 4) The Danzig Crisis and the Growing War Spirit.
 - 5) Attitude of the German Press Toward Britain.
 - 6) British Offer of Negotiations Through Sir H. Wilson.
 - 7) General Resumé.
 - 8) Reception Given to Sir H. Wilson's Offer in Berlin.

GEHEIM

Aufzeichnung

über die Entwicklung der politischen Beziehungen zwischen Deutschland und England während meiner Amtszeit in London
Mai 1938 - August 1939.

- I. Mai 1938 - München.
- II. München-Prag.
- III. Prag.
- IV. Mai 1939 - Kriegsausbruch.
 - 1). Einkreisungsaktion auf vollen Touren.
 - 2). Wachsende Gegenwirkung gegen die Einkreisungsaktion.
 - 3). Wege zur Entspannung.
 - 4). Danzig-Krise und wachsende Kriegsstimmung.
 - 5). Haltung der deutschen Presse gegenüber England.
 - 6). Englisches Verhandlungsangebot durch Sir H. Wilson.
 - 7). Zusammenfassender Ueberblick.
 - 8). Aufnahme des Sir H. Wilson-Angebots in Berlin.

I.
Mai 1938 - München.

Meine Ernennung nach London erreichte mich in Alexandrien am 2. April 1938. Am 10. April traf ich in Berlin ein. Am 30. April reiste ich nach London ab.

Die englische Haltung gegenüber Deutschland in diesem Zeitabschnitt wurde durch zwei verschiedene Tatsachen, bzw. Strömungen gekennzeichnet: durch den stärker sich geltend machenden Einfluß des Ministerpräsidenten Chamberlain auf die auswärtige Politik und durch den Anschluß Österreichs.

Nachdem Chamberlain schon vor seiner Ernennung zum Ministerpräsidenten als Finanzminister einen außerordentlich starken Einfluß auf die Geschicke seines Landes ausgeübt hatte - aber mehr finanz- und wirtschaftspolitisch, sowie auf die Empire-Politik - ging er als Ministerpräsident dazu über, auch die Außenpolitik Englands zu lenken. Da er die eingewurzelte passive Widerstandskraft der Beamtenschaft des Foreign Office gegen ihr unsympathische außenpolitische Richtlinien kannte, stützte er sich für seine außenpolitischen Pläne mehr auf Sir Horace Wilson, den

Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 29

MAY 1938—MUNICH

My appointment to London reached me in Alexandria on April 2, 1938. On April 10 I arrived in Berlin. On April 30 I left for London.

The British attitude toward Germany in this period was determined by two different acts, or trends: by the increasing influence of Prime Minister Chamberlain on foreign policy, and by the Austrian Anschluss.

Before his appointment to the Premiership, while still Chancellor of the Exchequer, Chamberlain had exercised an extraordinarily powerful influence on the destiny of his country—although more in the sphere of financial and economic policy and Empire policy—and when he became Prime Minister he also began to direct England's foreign policy. Aware of the ingrained power of passive resistance of the Foreign Office officials to a line of foreign policy with which they were not in sympathy, he relied in his foreign political plans more on Sir Horace Wilson, the "Secretary of State in the Reich Chancellery."¹ Further, he dismissed from the Cabinet Foreign Secretary Eden, who was responsible for the failure of the Abyssinian policy, and replaced him by a man loyal to him, Lord Halifax. Against the wishes of the Foreign Office, he appointed Sir Neville Henderson Ambassador to Berlin.

Chamberlain's aim in foreign policy was to endeavour to reach an adjustment with the totalitarian States. In the early part of March 1938 he had a proposal made to the Reich Government—a very incomplete and inadequate one—

¹ "Staatssekretär in der Reichskanzlei." Sir H. Wilson was the Head of H. M. Civil Service.

for the settlement of the colonial question, which Henderson conveyed to the Führer personally (no reply was given by the German side); and he began negotiations with Italy with a view to straightening out the Abyssinian tangle and delimiting interests in the Near East. These negotiations led, in April, to the conclusion of a comprehensive agreement.

As against this positive trend in Anglo-German relations, there were the negative effects caused by the Austrian Anschluss. England, which, retrospectively, is prone to claim that she welcomed every justified action of German policy, and had only condemned the dissolution of the State of Czechoslovakia, in reality had condemned outright all actions undertaken by Germany in justified protection of her vital interests, and had replied to them with a savage campaign in the press. This was true of the occupation of the Rhineland, later of the Sudeten German solution, and, in the spring of 1938, of the Austrian Anschluss. The latter had an all the stronger influence in England for the fact that the British Government's information was clearly very meagre and presumably came from legitimist circles in Austria; at any rate, the strength of the feeling in Austria in favour of Anschluss and the preparations for it were unknown in London. The attitude of the public was therefore unanimously unfavourable and inimical: "the rape of Austria"¹—the violation² of Austria—was the keynote, and remained so for a long time.

There was also a certain duality in the attitude of the Government itself toward Germany: whereas Lord Halifax set value on maintaining a certain contact with the German Embassy—for example, our Chargé d'Affaires was the first

¹ In the original these words are in English.

² "Vergewaltigung."

of the foreign representatives whom he informed of the political consequences of Daladier's visit to London—the Home Office denounced the Anglo-German passport convention. That the alleged passport technicalities offered as an excuse were not the determining factor became evident when Germany met the objections and the denunciation was not retracted. This made it clear that the Home Office wanted to avoid applications for entry which for one reason or another it considered undesirable; by undesirable was meant any utterance in a positive National-Socialist spirit.

Anglo-German relations were thus already at this period characterized by the parallel existence of two mutually contradictory trends on the English side.

No sooner had the inflammatory campaign over the Austrian Anschluss died down than the Czechoslovak issue—in a way, perforce and automatically—came to the fore. Already at my first visit to Lord Halifax, it formed, on his initiative, the chief subject of conversation. In accordance with my instructions, I intimated that we were anxious for a peaceful solution of the Sudeten German question, but that the oppression of the Sudeten Germans must cease. Then, on May 21, the Czech week-end crisis brought the Sudeten German question to the forefront of European problems, where it remained until it was settled at the Munich conference. At the time of the week-end crisis the British Government was completely under the sway of the alarmist Czechoslovak information, or of the false information of its Secret Service and its military attachés. It simply took the stand that the Czech reports of German troops concentrations must have some basis, and directed corresponding warnings to us. It was obvious that British endorsement of the Czech insinuations must provoke the sharpest reaction from Germany. The week-end crisis thus marked another unfavourable turn in Anglo-German relations.

A certain sobriety and critical attitude toward Beneš set in as soon as the true state of affairs became known; but too late to obliterate the impression caused in Germany. Soon after this a tendency was revealed to settle the Sudeten German question, which was recognized as dangerous, in a decent manner and in Germany's favour. A person closely connected with the French Embassy in London suggested to us that we should propose a plebiscite in the Sudetenland, as this proposal would most likely be accepted by England and France. In reply to my telegram on the subject, I soon after received instructions not to pursue the matter.

In the succeeding months the Czechoslovak question lost its extreme acuteness, although the politically-minded public was still keenly preoccupied with it. Henlein's visit to London¹ had a particularly big effect. That the Government was seeking for a peaceful solution was indicated by several lengthy articles in the "Times," which put out certain feelers in the direction of cession of the Sudetenland, or at least of a plebiscite. They were attributed to semi-official inspiration.

The general feeling was at this period very strongly influenced by the armament propaganda of the Government, especially as regards air armament. The anti-German campaign in the greater part of the press worked in a similar direction. The general public began to believe that a war was unavoidable, and fell into hysterical panic: servant girls refused to accept positions in houses on the South Coast, because they were afraid of German bombs. Our Embassy Counsellor, who wanted to rent a house, had three leases which were ready for signature cancelled by the lessors—the reason: because of the impending war with Germany,

¹ See Document No. 3.

there was no sense in making a contract with a member of the German Embassy. There was a general complaint that houses in London were practically unsaleable—again because of fear of German bombs. This state of mind of the populace also found expression in the strong pressure brought to bear by Parliament on the Government in favour of bigger air armament and more effective measures of air defence. The responsible Ministers, Lord Winterton and Swinton, had to yield to this mood. England had become conscious of the fact that she was no longer an island.

Anglo-German relations were given a certain fillip by the discussion regarding the assumption of the Austrian debts by Germany. Our refusal to yield to the British demands was followed by a fairly sharp exchange of views, during which England threatened to deduct the sums supposedly owed from the balance of payments. Compulsory clearings would have meant a commercial war. In the end, negotiations on a broad basis on the subject of Austria's debts and economic matters were agreed to. They were conducted in London and led to an agreement on July 1. This agreement not only had a very favourable effect on economic relations and on the City, but created an auspicious atmosphere in the domain of foreign relations.

This favourable atmosphere was further promoted by the visit of the Führer's adjutant, Captain Wiedemann. He had been there several times during the course of the summer, without however having had any talks with official persons. Now he had come with the knowledge of the Führer to sound out, at Field-Marshal Goering's request, whether a visit of the latter would be welcomed in London. Herr Wiedemann had a long talk with Lord Halifax, who brought Cadogan into it. The British Government eagerly welcomed the idea of a visit from the Field-Marshal; Halifax went so far as to say that it would be the finest moment of his life

if the Führer were to drive along the Mall side by side with the King during a visit of state to London. Captain Wiedemann informed me of his talks and undertook, at my express request, also to inform the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, who had not yet been apprised of them. This seemed to me the best way out of the predicament: that of being informed of a foreign political step of which the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs had no knowledge.

The political and emotional value of these preliminary talks was greatly diminished by the fact that, owing to a customary indiscretion, they found their way into the British press and were misused as a basis for the most sensational conjecturers. The project was thereupon dropped by Berlin. Further negotiations with leading British figures were conducted during the following two months through Princess Hohenlohe.

A few days later—approximately July 24—I took my vacation, previous to which I paid a farewell visit, among others, to Sir Horace Wilson. He asked me whether I would like to see the Prime Minister, and a little later led me to the latter's study. In a conversation lasting twenty minutes, Chamberlain expressed his concern over the German-Czechoslovak conflict, and requested that nothing precipitate be undertaken by the German side, for any resort to force might have far-reaching consequences. Let the British Government be given time; it would do everything in its power to promote a peaceful solution. Chamberlain said nothing to me about the British Government's decision to send Lord Runciman to Prague as mediator—which the press announced a day or two later.

This visit too was indiscreetly divulged to the press and was furnished with distorting comments; in particular, it was said that the initiative came from me and that the visit was connected with the Wiedemann visit. After an

insistent talk with Wilson over the telephone, a supplementary statement was made to the press—it could not be called a correction, because it too was biased and misrepresented the facts. The Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs twice telephoned me on the subject; I gave him the required explanations.

The general trend of British policy in regard to the Czechoslovak question became more and more distinct in the course of the summer: the British Government wanted to avoid war if at all possible. It was seeking for a solution which would meet Germany's demands. It seemed prepared to exercise strong pressure on the Czechs, provided no forcible methods were resorted to, but only methods of negotiation. Otherwise, there was the danger that England would intervene on the side of our opponents. This was the line I took in my oral and written reports.

At the end of July I arrived in Berlin on leave. I made a rather lengthy report to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, and was also invited to see the Führer's Deputy in Munich, to whom I also made a report; and I had a long conversation with Herr von Neurath.

Approximately on August 8 I received a private letter from Chamberlain, who informed me of the sending of Lord Runciman to Prague, which had already taken place, and spoke of the importance of this mission; it was undertaken, he said, in the service of peace and to find a solution that would be acceptable to both sides. Chamberlain requested, or suggested, that I should inform the Führer of this in my next report to him.

As I was in Reichenhall taking the cure, and had already made the necessary application through the Foreign Office Chancellery to report to the Führer, I now endeavoured to have a definite date fixed for it. But in spite of various efforts of Minister of State Meissner, they were of no avail at the Berghof.

In the meanwhile tension was growing, owing to the continued and intensified Czech persecution of the Sudeten Germans and the latter's growing despair, especially during the Party Congress. After my repeated requests to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs to have a date set for my report to the Führer in order to convey Chamberlain's message to him, I was at last admitted to him just before a tea the Führer was giving for the foreign guests of honour. The report was very brief—only five to seven minutes. I informed him of the contents of Chamberlain's letter, whereat the Führer remarked that the English General Hamilton had told him that Runciman was an inveterate liberal and that he seemed to have a poor understanding of the problems he was to occupy himself with. To my reply that he would probably learn, the Führer rejoined that he would not have much time for it. This ended the conversation, whose appointed duration was curtailed by Dr. Ley interrupting with his labour detachments.

Before and after my report to the Führer, the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, who was considering the idea of not allowing the ambassadors to London and Paris to return to their posts, was received by the Führer for a brief conference. He then told me to remain in Germany for the time being; Count Welczek also.

The Führer's big speech in Nuremberg on September 12 was followed by a further increase in the tension, which was finally relieved by Chamberlain's visit to Berchtesgaden. According to instructions, I went to Munich and Berchtesgaden together with the gentlemen from the Foreign Office, but was not invited to attend the conference at the Berghof, and only went into action on the return journey to Munich, when I drove in the same automobile with Sir Horace Wilson. He seemed personally quite satisfied with the results of the conference, but stressed the great

difficulties which Chamberlain would have to overcome in order to win Parliament and the French for our demands.

I took a similar part in the Godesberg conference; here again I travelled with Sir Horace Wilson by automobile from Cologne to Godesberg. Wilson seemed quite satisfied with what had been achieved, namely, that Chamberlain had gained the consent of the French and the Czechs to the cession of Sudeten Germany after a plebiscite. He mentioned a pact of non-aggression which was then to be given to the rest of Czechia. Above all, he stressed that the German time limits must not be too short or bear the character of an ultimatum, for this might upset the whole arrangement. When I told the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs of this, he answered: "Three days!" I was not called into the Godesberg talks, nor had I any other opportunity to speak with the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs or with the Führer. On the way back to Cologne Sir Horace Wilson was extremely worried and depressed.

I did not participate in the Munich conference. In reply to my telephone inquiry, I was instructed by the Foreign Office to return to my post via Berlin. I reported to the Secretary of State before my departure, since I got no opportunity to see the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. The impression in Berlin was that the Anglo-German protocol signed in Munich would not alter the existing situation much.

II

MUNICH-PRAGUE

When I returned to London on October 6 and had acquainted myself with the mood there, it seemed to me that the most important result of the crisis just passed through was that Anglo-German relations were none the worse for it.

The crisis was looked upon rather as a natural catastrophe, which was now happily over, and for which no one was to blame. There was also a greater realization of the unnaturalness of the Czech State and its fragility. There was quiet rejoicing that the Munich conference had definitely removed Czechia as a cause of friction. The protocol signed by the Führer and Chamberlain at Munich was looked upon as a new foundation and guiding line for the development of Anglo-German relations ("peace for a lifetime")¹; it was believed that on this foundation an adjustment could be achieved and the tension relieved. The subject of discussion was, what problems existed between the two countries and how they could be settled.

At the same time, chiefly under the pressure of Parliament and to the accompaniment of a noisy campaign in the press, the armament drive was resumed and the "gaps"² which had been revealed at the time of the preparations for war at the end of September filled in.

The first shadow to fall on this, not uncheerful as seen from England, picture of Anglo-German relations was the Führer's Saarbrücken speech (tutelage,³ the attacks on Eden, Churchill, Cooper). Nevertheless, the succeeding weeks brought several speeches by Chamberlain, Sir Samuel Hoare, Sir John Simon and others containing direct or indirect requests that Germany should make her demands known in order that negotiations might be started; in these speeches colonies, raw materials and disarmament were referred to; in private conversations a delimitation of economic

¹ In the original these words are in English.

² In the original this word is in English.

³ "Gouvernantenhaftigkeit." The speech Dirksen refers to was published in the "Völkischer Beobachter" on October 10, 1938. Hitler said: "Gouvernantenhafte Bevormundung vertragen wir nicht mehr" ("We will not tolerate tutelage any longer").

spheres of interest was mentioned as a point of the program; the term "Lebensraum" received currency only later. Appreciative and friendly things were said of the German people ("a manly, strong and courageous race"). The tendency, which was to come definitely to the fore in later months, to draw a distinction between the German people and their leading men and to play off one against the other, was at that time only incipient. It took its origin from the Munich conference and the peaceable spirit of the public which was said to have been observed there.

The above-mentioned line of thought expressed in various speeches was repeated to me by Sir Samuel Hoare when we spent a week-end together at Petworth House.

Since no friendly answer was received from the German side to these English feelers, but rather discouraging official and press statements, these voices in England calling for clarification and negotiation gradually fell silent. I myself, in the absence of official instructions, confined myself to attributing our unreceptive attitude to our distrust of England's excessive armament, to the press campaign, to Duff Cooper's inflammatory articles, etc., and for the rest tried to keep things even until an explanation on a broader basis were forthcoming.

This came very soon in connection with the anti-Jewish demonstrations in Germany on November 10. They were followed by an extremely strong reaction in England, partly based on emotion and inadequate understanding of the German viewpoint, and partly deliberately fostered. All the anti-German and pro-Jewish elements came into action and unleashed an unbridled anti-German propaganda—especially the émigrés, the influential part of the political and business public who are dependent on the Jews, the ultra-pacifists, etc. Numerous official persons took up a hostile attitude toward us in speeches and public utterances.

The Lord Baldwin Fund, with its collections, advertisements, etc., provided another desired opportunity for anti-German propaganda, under a humanitarian guise. During these weeks all voices of reason and all promptings toward mutual clarification were stilled. Things became a little more tranquil in December. Another incident, although shortlived, arose in connection with the draft of Chamberlain's speech at the Foreign Press Association dinner, which compelled me at the last moment to decline the invitation on behalf of all the Germans.

When, after this, toward the end of December, another lull set in, the question again arose as to what new spur could be given to Anglo-German relations so as to develop them along the lines of the protocol signed by the Führer and Chamberlain at Munich. I came to the conclusion that the *economic*¹ way offered the best prospects. On the German side, economic questions held first place; the Führer, in his speech of January 30, had given prominence to the vital necessity of export trade for Germany and had envisaged a series of years of peace; Schacht's visit to London in December had paved the way for economic co-operation; during my stay in Berlin in the middle of January the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs had expressed his full agreement with all such tendencies. In my preparatory talks I had observed a lively sympathy with these ideas on the English side.

Consequently, in the middle of December, I began to lay increasing stress in my talks with influential Englishmen on the idea that the way to relieve the tension must be sought in the economic field: there were plenty of causes of political friction, but economic interests were common and they were capable of being developed; furthermore,

¹ Underscored in the original.

they at present held first place with us. It was therefore necessary and expedient to achieve calm and confidence by means of co-operation in the economic sphere; then we would see. I expressed these ideas, for example, to Lord Runciman, during a week-end at Bocket Hall, when he told me that he had been especially commissioned by Chamberlain to occupy himself with German affairs. I also went into the subject at length with Lord Halifax and with other authoritative figures. That these talks had their effect I was to observe several months later, when Lord Runciman spoke to me about the suggestions I had made.

The moment was all the more favourable for greater activity in the economic field because several opportunities offered themselves to inaugurate this course: at the end of January the annual dinner of the Anglo-German Chamber of Commerce took place; coal negotiations were in progress, to which great value was attached by the British side; and, lastly, negotiations were being contemplated between the central industrial federations of the two countries. All three opportunities were actively utilized; numerous representative men from both sides were present at the annual dinner of the Chamber of Commerce—Ministerialdirektor Wiehl, Secretary for Overseas Trade Hudson and many others. On this occasion a trial balloon was released for the first time by the English side to ascertain whether Reich Economic Minister Funk would not pay a visit to London. The coal negotiations, too, made good progress, thanks to mutual concessions, and led to the arrangement which put an end to underselling and to market stealing. The conclusion of the agreement was demonstratively celebrated by a dinner, at which President of the Board of Trade Stanley was present and made a speech. The negotiations between the leading federations of the two countries were set for the end of

February in Düsseldorf and both sides intended to send their top men.

The most significant forward step was the move to invite Reich Economic Minister Funk to London. After the first feeler at the Chamber of Commerce dinner, this suggestion was repeated a few days later so distinctly that it became necessary to secure an answer from Berlin. It ran that owing to pressure of work Herr Funk was not at present available for a visit to London, nor could a later date for the visit be set. Nevertheless, the English side did not drop the idea of an exchange of visits, for which President of the Board of Trade Stanley was had in mind. Sir Frederick Leith-Ross visited me at my office for a talk on the subject. Although the German side was not responsive, Stanley's visit was insisted on in British quarters and it was suggested, by way of German reciprocation, that I should attend a dinner to be arranged by the coal interests of the two countries and make a speech in which I would refer to the exchange of visits. This proposal had to be accepted by us; on the instructions of the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, I had to submit the draft of my speech to him; it was couched in pronounced sober and matter-of-fact terms.

The celebration of the conclusion of the coal agreement was attended by all the influential representatives of the German coal industry and their British colleagues. Distinctly friendly speeches were made at the dinner, including one by President of the Board of Trade Stanley. The British participants repeatedly remarked that co-operation with their German colleagues was proceeding without friction and in full confidence, and much more happily than with the Americans. Advantage was taken of the opportunity to make final arrangements for Stanley's visit to Berlin, the occasion to be a dinner of the Board of Industry in Berlin. All arrangements were also made for the negotiations of

the top federations in Düsseldorf. It became more and more apparent that the English side attached greater importance to this meeting than was warranted by its rather moderate agenda; the opportunity was to be used to establish personal contacts, with a view to a general understanding between the industries of the two countries. The atmosphere was unusually favourable and also had an alleviating effect on the political tension.

At that time, the end of February, I had no reason to suspect that these developments would be disturbed on the political side by the impending events in Czechoslovakia. While I was in Berlin on official business in the middle of January, the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs, who at our first talk had shown coolness toward England, at our last talk, four days later, betrayed a lively interest in more actively promoting Anglo-German relations in the economic sphere. Since just at this time Mussolini's minute of his talks with Chamberlain in Rome had arrived in Berlin, from which it was learned that Chamberlain had requested the Duce's co-operation in improving Anglo-German relations, I assumed that this circumstance also accounted for our responsive attitude.

I was confirmed in this impression by the fact that shortly after my return to London our Press Counsellor, Dr. Hesse, was summoned to Berlin by the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs and confidentially instructed to establish contact with the British Government through Chamberlain's press agent, Stewart, with whom Hesse was well acquainted, with a view to a general rapprochement. The conclusion of a treaty of non-aggression was also to be suggested, for the signing of which the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs had expressed his readiness to come to London. When Hesse made these overtures, Stewart declared that the matter was so important that it must be submitted

to responsible political quarters. After this Dr. Hesse was invited for a talk with Sir Horace Wilson, who played the part of listener. No further response to these overtures from the English side was however forthcoming, perhaps because the political events—Czechoslovakia—rendered an answer superfluous, or perhaps because the English were not pleased that the approach was made through unofficial channels. In support of the latter assumption there was the remark which Halifax casually let fall in conversation with me: "Herr von Ribbentrop wants to come to London."¹ To this I emphatically replied that that was not the right way to treat the overtures of the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs; he was seeking for a way to improve the strained relations with England, and had had his views on the subject conveyed to England in an unofficial way in order not to lay himself open to an official refusal.

When I was in Berlin at the end of February for the opening of the exhibition of old Japanese art (I got an attack of influenza and could not participate in any affairs, and had official conversations only on the last two days before my departure), rumours were thickening that in March matters with Czechoslovakia would come to a head, and that this might necessitate a lightning German invasion. The Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs had no time to receive me, so that I got no certain confirmation of this, nor even any instructions as to what to say nor opportunity to determine what attitude to take with regard to the presumable repercussions a German invasion of Czechoslovakia would have in England.

On my return to England on March 9, and down to March 15, I found the same optimistic mood as had prevailed in February. Stanley's visit to Berlin was to take place soon

¹ In the original these words are in English.

—on March 17—and it was obvious that the British Government attached great importance to it. That the English side regarded it as an act of high policy became apparent only later, after it had aborted, from statements made by Stanley himself. It was likewise ascertained only later that at the end of February—according to information received by Herr Staatsrat Wohlthat—the British Cabinet had decided to restore Germany's colonies.

Bearing these developments in mind, it is evident that the British Government had the intention of resuming the rapprochement with Germany which had been hanging fire after Munich and after the Jewish incident.

III

PRAGUE

When, on about March 12, the conflict between Czechia and Slovakia broke out—as a consequence of the change of Cabinet forced on Slovakia by Prague—the British press did not betray any particular interest in these events. The separation of Slovakia was also received calmly; the press was fairly unanimous in declaring that these were events which did not concern Great Britain.

On the other hand, the German march into Bohemia and Moravia, and the occupation of Prague, marked a turning point in Anglo-German relations and in Britain's foreign policy generally. The events of March 15 affected the British mentality in a threefold way:

1) From the standpoint of balance of power,¹ the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia, and the establishment of

¹ "Machtpolitisch."

the Protectorate¹ of Slovakia, had transcended that accession of power which Britain was prepared to allow Germany as a result of unilateral action and without prior understanding with her. The Austrian Anschluss had already been received with disapproval because it had altered the balance of power in Germany's favour. The incorporation of Sudeten Germany² as a result of the Munich conference was looked upon as a full-sized diplomatic defeat; but it was swallowed—with the mental reservation, however, that now Britain's world position and world prestige were at stake.

2) From the standpoint of foreign policy—the relations between the two nations—the unilateral liquidation of Czechoslovakia was regarded as a violation of the Munich agreement, as an infringement of the letter, or at least of the spirit, of this agreement. The mood of the broad masses was even more strongly influenced by the feeling that Chamberlain had been "diddled," that it was "unfair"³ to the old man, who last September had flown three times to Germany in order "to save the peace."

3) The whole conception which the average Englishman had formed of National Socialism began to totter. One of the few fundamental principles of National Socialism which had become clear to the Englishman, and for which he had a certain understanding, was the race theory. He also recalled the German assurances that Germany had no interest in incorporating the Czechs, as alien in origin and race. That this had now happened, that Germany had incorporated some seven million people of alien race, he regarded as an inexplicable contradiction between principle and action.

¹ "Schutzstaat."

² "Sudetendeutschlands."

³ In the original this word is in English.

The above-mentioned considerations, sentiments and impressions to a certain extent knocked the bottom out of Anglo-German relations. It goes without saying that this attitude toward the German entry into Bohemia and Moravia was largely mistaken, or at least biased, and completely ignored the march of events. It took no account of the fact that the situations in residual Czechia¹ was becoming more and more untenable, that the excesses committed by the Prague Government against Slovakia had set the ball rolling, that President Hácha himself had prompted the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia, and that the Protectorate had not been incorporated but granted broad autonomy.

There was no time in which to bring all these counter-arguments into play. The march into Prague came to the British public as a bolt from the blue. After it had recovered from the first shock, opinion began, with a speed and intensity which ran roughshod over all reason, to shape in the above-mentioned direction of a complete lack of understanding of Germany's actions. There was neither time nor opportunity to influence public opinion in Germany's favour, scarcely even in private conversation. On the 15th the news of the occupation of Prague became known, and already on the 19th both sides recalled their ambassadors.

The official reception of the news of the occupation of Prague was at first not bad. Both Chamberlain and Halifax that same day made moderate statements in Parliament: disapproval, but the existing policy had to be continued. Stanley's visit was naturally at once cancelled; but otherwise there were still no conspicuous signs of the beginning of that revulsion of feeling which was to take place in the next few days.

¹ "Resttschehei."

The stiffening of Britain's attitude did not originate with the Government but with the politically-minded public, with Parliament and the constituencies; it was all the stronger in London because of the closer contact between the Members of Parliament and their constituents. There were various reasons for this calm before the storm and for the loosening of the storm by broad political circles: the average Englishman, who is slow on the uptake, had first to recover from the shock of the unexpected news and to become clear on the meaning of the event. When he did so, he became a prey to the feelings and thoughts already described. To this was added a circumstance of decisive importance: it became clear to the Conservative electorate that the dissolution of the Czechoslovak State not only signified a political defeat for Chamberlain, because of the shipwreck of his "appeasement" policy, but that it also imperilled his position in home politics, and hence the power of the Conservative Party generally. All the elements interested in the maintenance of this position, in particular, the whole party machine, now went into action and, from considerations of election tactics, exerted pressure on Chamberlain and the Cabinet in order, by adopting sharper language toward Germany and abandoning the appeasement policy, to take the wind out of the sails of the opposition parties (and especially of the opposition groups within the Conservative Party) and to reckon with the mood of the electorate.

Simultaneously, the influential anti-German elements acting behind the scenes began to stir, especially in the Foreign Office, and influenced Foreign Secretary Halifax, who himself was loyal to the Prime Minister, to reorientate British foreign policy. There can be no doubt that the policy of encirclement was hatched in the Foreign Office during these days.

It was under the pressure of these influences that Chamberlain made his speech in Birmingham on Friday, March 17, couched in the sharpest terms. It also contained the first germs of the encirclement policy, as foreshadowed in the statement that Britain would enter into contact with other like-minded powers.

Events now began to move more swiftly. At this time I had two sharp altercations with Halifax, who not only emphatically discountenanced the annexation of Bohemia and Moravia and was deaf to counterarguments, but also became obstructive generally and deliberately created difficulties: he flatly refused to apologize for the shameless insult offered to the Führer by Duff Cooper in the House of Commons without being called to order by the Speaker; he threatened the expulsion of German subjects and demanded the recall of a member of the Embassy. That same day, March 18, Ambassador Henderson was ostentatiously recalled to London "to report."

In these days and during the week-end the hostile mood toward Germany was fanned by the following circumstances: Members of Parliament who had travelled to their constituencies over the week-end in order to test the feeling of their electorate came back under the influence of the rabid attitude which prevailed in the country and exercised a corresponding influence on the Government. We thus had the converse of the development of 1936, at the time of the occupation of the Rhineland, when it was the Government and Parliament which were at first in favour of war, but under the moderating influence of the electorate had to declare in favour of greater restraint.

Feeling was further whipped up by a rabid press campaign over Germany's alleged designs of conquest against Rumania. During the negotiations for a trade agreement, owing to an intrigue—of a private business character—on

the part of the Rumanian Minister in London, Tilea, the Government and the public became obsessed with the idée fixe that Germany was about to invade Rumania. This hysterical state of mind was enhanced by rumours that Germany had undertaken extensive military preparations on the Polish border, likewise with the intention of invading Poland, or at least the Danzig region.

After it became known that Henderson had been recalled to London, I, too, on Saturday, March 18, received instructions to proceed to Berlin to report. I left on Sunday, and arrived in Berlin on Monday, the 20th. The Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs had no time to receive me and hear my report. After waiting five days, I went with the consent of the Reichsminister to Gröditzberg, and held myself at his disposal. However, I was not summoned to report, but instead was invited to attend a dinner given by the Führer to guests of honour and to hear the Führer's speech on April 28. Here, too, there was no opportunity to make my report to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. When, on May 2, I received instructions to return to my post, I declared that I could do so only after having reported to the Reichsminister. In the course of the appointment which was granted me soon after, the Reichsminister gave me a directive to the effect that we did not want war with Britain, but that we were prepared for all eventualities. If Poland started anything with Germany, she would be smashed. We were prepared for a ten years' war, even for a twenty years' war. The British should stop supporting Poland.

On May 6 I arrived back in London.

PRAGUE—OUTBREAK OF WAR

1) *Encirclement Policy in Full Blast.* During my absence the great swing in British foreign policy had been effected and had borne its fruits: the attempts to improve the strained relations with Germany by means of direct talks were for the time being abandoned. Instead, an effort was made to build up a world coalition against Germany, in order forcibly to prevent expansion of the German Lebensraum and to compel Germany, at the point of the pistol, so to speak, to submit her wishes to this tribunal, which would then decide.

In its first outburst of hatred, the British Government had showered a number of States with guarantees, which were unilateral if the State in question was averse to a bilateral treaty, and bilateral if the given State was prepared to allow itself to be drawn into the system of alliances. With the greatest precipitation, a very close alliance was concluded with Poland, not for the least reason because of the false reports of a German invasion.

On my return to London I endeavoured to form a picture of Anglo-German relations, whether they were drifting irresistibly toward war, or whether there was still a hope of peace. The general situation as I had seen it from Germany seemed to indicate that war was inevitable, since England was openly pursuing her encirclement policy with great intensity without regard for the political, military or financial cost involved, and Germany—according to the Führer's speech in Wilhelmshaven—could not, as in 1914, look calmly on until the iron ring was forged.

My first impressions in London seemed to bear out this view. The encirclement policy had just reached the point where the Soviet Union was to be brought in. Those

protracted and fluctuating negotiations were started which were to last all through the summer. Noteworthy was the doggedness, the fanaticism, almost the hysteria with which the political public urged on the negotiations and compelled the Government to make greater and greater concessions in order that the pact might be concluded as speedily as possible. All slaps in the face from the Soviet Union were accepted, the increasingly insolent artifices of the Russians were acceded to, until the point had almost been reached where, by yielding on the subject of "indirect aggression," the small States would be surrendered to Russia's mercy.

It was apparent from the behaviour of the public that the pressure to secure a speedy agreement was exerted only because it was felt that without Russia's help the coalition would not be strong enough to achieve its purpose. The fairly strong stamp of hysteria that marked all these considerations in England did not give the impression of strength.

Parallel with the Russian negotiations, all through the summer months there were countless separate technical negotiations with the other partners to the encirclement policy: financial negotiations with Poland, military discussions with Poland in London, General Ironside's visit to Warsaw, credits to Rumania and Turkey, a Turkish military mission to London, influence on Yugoslavia.

This persistent activity strengthened the impression, especially abroad, that England was working at top speed to make the encirclement watertight against all eventualities, and wanted to, and hence would, increase the war danger. Whatever reasonable tendencies still existed were thereby smothered. All the more that the press knew no bounds in its campaign of lies and slanders. The "Sunday Express," for example, published a series of articles under the title: "The Man Who Murdered Hitler." According

to them, the Führer had been murdered some time ago and had been replaced by a double who had been made ready for the purpose beforehand! Furthermore, it was reported in several newspapers that Goering had been wounded in an attempt on his life, etc., etc.

The attitude of the authorities was also distinctly unfriendly toward Germans. Landesgruppenleiter Karlowa and five other Party members were expelled from the country without any reason assigned. Other German subjects, merchants who had been doing business in England for ten or fifteen years, were deprived of their residential permits; others were not allowed to return to England. German children who attended English schools found it practically impossible to continue because of the rabid anti-German character of the instruction.

2) *Growing Reaction to the Encirclement Policy.* On closer examination of the various trends it appeared that all that glittered was not gold—that is, that not all that outwardly posed as a firm front driving for war was so in reality. More and more there began to crystallize small but influential groups, for whom the encirclement front was not an end in itself but a means to an end, in other words, England felt herself inferior to Germany and not an equal as a negotiating partner. She wanted, through armament and the formation of a coalition, to compel Germany to effectuate her further demands through negotiations. A growing understanding of these demands was moreover to be observed. Even the concept "Lebensraum" was gaining currency in the English language.

Parallel with these more reasonable tendencies, a more sober attitude was developing regarding the effectiveness of the united front that was in process of making. While joy was unreserved over the incorporation of Turkey into this front, disillusionment was growing with respect to

Poland and Russia: recognition was gradually gaining ground of the fragility of the Polish State, its megalomaniac pretensions, and its insatiable need of money. The Soviet Union created bad feeling because of the increasingly onerous conditions it put forward in the negotiations, its patent distrust of Chamberlain, and its cold and haughty response to Britain's wooings.

Outwardly these sentiments were expressed in several speeches by Chamberlain and Halifax, in which the principle of England's dual policy—or twin-action policy,¹ as it was otherwise called—was clearly adumbrated: England wants by means of armament and the acquisition of allies to make herself strong and equal to the Axis, but at the same time she wants by means of negotiations to seek an adjustment with Germany, and is prepared to make sacrifices for it: on the question of the colonies, raw material supplies, Lebensraum, and spheres of economic interest. These were the salient points mentioned, without, however, concrete proposals having been made.

3) *Ways of Relaxing the Tension.* After I had sounded the ground and discovered the above-mentioned lines of development, I considered that the most effective thing would be to endeavour to influence leading British political circles along two lines: first to warn against the adopted policy of encirclement, then to make constructive proposals with a view to breaking the tension.

I filtered my warnings of the dire consequences with which persistence in the encirclement policy was fraught into political channels through three ways: in part, personally, in part through members of the Embassy staff whom I enlisted for this purpose, especially the Press Counsellor, and in part, through conversations with a) official

¹ "Zwillingspolitik."

persons, b) men in public life (Members of Parliament, journalists, etc.), and c) through suitable members of the diplomatic corps.

Definite limits were set to my efforts to influence official persons by the fact that I was in duty bound to exercise reserve. I had therefore to refrain from approaching Chamberlain or Halifax officially. But in course of time I succeeded in establishing the desired contacts by other ways. At a lunch at the home of Under Secretary of State Butler, where in addition only Halifax and Kordt were present, I had a long conversation with Halifax. I also had a detailed talk with Sir Horace Wilson (which means, with Chamberlain) and several conversations with Lord Chatfield and Lord Runciman.

The attempts to influence public men did not encounter great difficulties. Such talks were sought for and initiated by M.P.s themselves, not to mention journalists and publicists.

The two most important points in my argument were the following: a) put concisely: Britain, by her guarantee to Poland, had placed the peace of the world in the hands of minor Polish officials and military men (provocation of incidents in the Corridor or in Danzig); b) the threat to Germany from the British encirclement policy was clear to the *entire* German people, who were unanimously determined to parry this danger and not to tolerate a repetition of 1914. These two main themes were supplemented by other detailed arguments; in particular, I wanted to enlighten the English, who are unsophisticated in continental, and especially in East European, affairs, on the nature of the Polish State, and on our claims to Danzig and the Corridor.

My efforts regarding a constructive policy, that is, the possibility of relaxing the tension through negotiations,

had as their object the establishment of direct contact between the Führer and a leading English public figure. Apart from the fact that this way seemed to me the most expeditious and the one most promising of success, I was strengthened in this idea by a statement which the Führer was supposed to have made: namely, that he was certain that in a direct conversation conducted in German with a decent and straightforward Englishman, he would have no great difficulty in finding a satisfactory settlement for existing issues. (This statement was later, at the end of June, confirmed to me by Baron Geyr through Herr Hewel.) It was not difficult to give currency to this idea of direct conversations among influential Englishmen, since they themselves often suggested similar ideas. The surest sign that the suggestion had fallen on fruitful soil was that it was mentioned by third persons as their own idea.

But the difficulty was to choose a person whom the Führer would find congenial, that is, a straightforward, blunt and soldierly fellow who at the same time spoke German. I thought of Butler, Ironside, Burgin, Addison, Chatfield. But they all lacked something: either they did not know German, or fell short as personalities. The most suitable seemed to me Lord Chatfield. How widespread was the idea of such a talk was revealed by a remark made to me by Sir Horace Wilson to the effect that an outstanding person in the British business world was had in mind. It was later conveyed to me from Chamberlain and Sir Horace Wilson through an intermediary that all sorts of political busy-bodies—like Lord Mottistone—were trying to edge in, and the strictest secrecy was advisable. This intermediary offered his services for a further exchange of ideas and was utilized. Eventually, the matter took a different turn and ended in the conversations which Staatsrat Wohlthat and I had with Sir Horace Wilson.

4) *The Danzig Crisis and the Growing War Spirit.* How difficult it was to further these plans, and how intricate the general political situation had become was revealed when the Danzig question came to the fore and therewith the British commitments toward Poland were put to their first test. As the demands from the Danzig side for return to the Reich became more pressing, and Danzig took measures of self-defence, the British public became possessed by a growing nervousness. Nourished from the most diverse sources, a flood of lying reports alleging concentration of army corps in Danzig, bringing in of heavy artillery, building of fortifications, etc., poured into the British press. This inflammatory campaign reached its peak in the early days of July, when week-end United Press reports from Warsaw regarding a Danzig-Polish crisis, an ultimatum, etc., provoked a regular feeling of panic and crisis in London. The Embassy soon traced the crisis-mongers: they were American circles working through the American Embassy in Warsaw. This was the first, but a very distinct, sign that Roosevelt was interested in an aggravation of the situation, or in war, in order to secure, first the repeal of the neutrality law, and then his re-election thanks to the war.

These intrigues and crises had a direct effect, inasmuch as they compelled Chamberlain to declare in ever more precise terms that any change in the status quo in Danzig would constitute a *casus foederis* for Britain. Meanwhile the excitement, anti-German feeling, determination to fight, or fatalism of the general public were growing. The idea that any change in the existing situation undertaken without Poland's consent must be followed by a declaration of war by England on Germany had now become an *idée fixe* in the minds of broadest sections of the British public.

The cross-section of public sentiment at the beginning of July was roughly as follows: the first stratum comprised

a numerically small but politically influential group who realized the dangerousness of the course adopted and were anxious for an adjustment with Germany in one way or another—to a certain degree they were victims of their own policy; then came a broader stratum of determined anti-Germans bent on war, composed of the Churchill-Eden-Amery-Cooper circle¹ and their following of Left Liberal and ultra-pacifist elements, the newspaper group around the "Daily Chronicle," "Yorkshire Post" and "Manchester Guardian," influential Jewish groups, émigrés, American influences,² etc. Then, as the third stratum, came the general public, who felt no hatred toward Germany but were tired of the "eternal interruptions of peaceful development," for which they held Germany responsible. Their sentiments could best be expressed in the words: "If there is to be a fight, let us have it now."³ In general, this war spirit was stiffened by the feeling that the weak points in armament had been repaired and that, as regards the air force and air defence in particular, armament was adequate.

The difficulties in the way of an attempt to break the tension were therefore quite evident, and they were defined by me in conversations with Halifax, Wilson and many other persons as follows: the complexity of the British twin-action policy could not but strike the outside world as insincere. On the one hand, there were deeds: a feverish policy of encirclement and armament; on the other hand, words: peace and friendship with Germany. Another obstacle to conciliation was that all possibility of negotiation was debarred owing to the increasing rigidity of Chamberlain's statements, which corresponded with the increasingly cate-

¹ The word "circle" (Kreis) is written in ink above the line.

² "Amerikanische Einwirkungen."

³ In the original this phrase is in English.

gorical refusal of Poland to consent to any concessions. And, finally, the greatest hindrance to conciliation talks was the whipping up of public opinion by the press, so that every attempt at conciliation was branded as high treason. (Cf. the handling of the Hudson-Wohlthat negotiations by the press.)

5) *Attitude of the German Press Toward Britain.* It was not surprising, under these circumstances, that a favourable atmosphere for conciliation was absent on the German side and that no inclination was evinced to test the conciliatory statements occasionally made by British statesmen—such as Halifax's speeches in the House of Lords and at Chatam House. The German press viewed relations with England solely from the standpoint of her encirclement policy and for the rest polemicized with the British press, which furnished it with plenty of material therefor. Indeed, no other tone than the fortissimo could be expected from the German press, since it had already adopted the sharpest tone toward England since the autumn of 1938, and articles which were not of a polemical tendency were rarities. Although the public in both countries were already dulled to the mutual press feud and its increased sharpness only fell flat, the occasional personal attacks of the German press on leading English public men, or sarcastic remarks about the King, or the Palestine atrocity campaign against the British army caused additional bad blood and sawed deeper into the thin footplank of peace between Germany and England. The Press Counsellor of the Embassy was therefore right when he urged that the throttle should be put on this propaganda and pointed out that "a puff of wind would be enough to make the lion spring." One often got the impression, he added, that the idea was to make the British explode before Poland was ripe for attack.

Compared with these serious consequences fraught in

the attitude of the German press, or in the methods of German propaganda, the smaller instances of clumsiness or tactlessness which German propaganda displayed may pass unmentioned. It should only be mentioned that it was undoubtedly a mistake to have Reichsminister Goebbels' article in the "Völkischer Beobachter" against the propagandist Stephen King-Hall translated into English and circulated in England. A polemic intended for a German audience must fail in its effect on a British audience, especially when the translation is inadequate and clings so closely to the original that German jargon, such as "oller, ehrlicher Seebär" is translated: "You can tell those little tales to the marines, you honest old British Jack Tar." On the other hand, it deserves to be mentioned that informative writings about Danzig, such as Fuchs' pamphlet, were noticed and had a good effect. Similarly, Prof. Haferkorn of Danzig knew how to appeal effectively to influential British circles both orally and in his writings.

In general, however, viewed from England, the attitude of the German press toward England created the impression that any conciliatory word to Germany coming from her was taken as a sign of weakness and decadence, and every firm statement as an insolent challenge.

6) *British Offer of Negotiations.* In the middle of July, Anglo-German relations became a little more tranquil. This was due to the sobering effect produced by the realization that warmongering intrigues had been behind the Danzig crisis, to the reassuring news from Germany that leading personalities had gone on vacation, to the calmer atmosphere in Danzig, and to the desire of the British Government to adjourn Parliament for the holidays.

Either because of this, or by a chance coincidence, the already mentioned constructive trends in the British Government—which, instead of the negativity of the encircle-

ment front, sought to reach agreement with Germany by way of negotiation—began to shape into positive action. For this purpose Staatsrat Wohlthat was applied to, who had come to London for negotiations, already had good relations with the persons concerned, and, because of his activity as special economic commissioner for the Four-Year Plan, would help to stress the economic character of the conversations. The initiative came from Sir Horace Wilson, Chamberlain's closest collaborator and adviser. When Herr Wohlthat was in London for the whaling negotiations in July, Wilson invited him for a talk and, consulting prepared notes, outlined a program for a comprehensive adjustment of Anglo-German relations. The program envisaged political, military and economic arrangements.

In the political sphere, a non-aggression pact was contemplated, in which aggression would be renounced in principle. The underlying purpose of this treaty was to make it possible for the British gradually to disembarass themselves of their commitments toward Poland, on the ground that they had by this treaty secured Germany's renunciation of methods of aggression.

In addition, a pact of non-intervention was to be signed, which was to be in a way a wrapper¹ for a delimitation of the spheres of interest of the Great Powers.

In the military sphere, negotiations for an agreement regarding limitation of land, naval and air armaments was envisaged.

In the economic sphere, comprehensive proposals were made: negotiations were to be undertaken on colonial questions, supplies of raw material for Germany, delimitation of industrial markets, international debt problems, and the application of the most favoured nation clause.

¹ "Deckblatt."

The basic idea of these proposals, Sir Horace Wilson explained, was that they would broach and settle questions of such great importance that the deadlocked Near East questions, such as Danzig and Poland, would be pushed into the background, and then could be settled by Germany directly with Poland.

The importance of Wilson's proposals was demonstrated by the fact that Wilson invited Wohlthat to have them confirmed by Chamberlain personally, whose room was not far from Wilson's. Wohlthat, however, declined this in order not to prejudice the unofficial character of his mission.

Secretary of Overseas Trade Hudson, through the Norwegian delegate to the whaling conference, also invited Herr Wohlthat to a talk. After consulting with me, Herr Wohlthat consented. In a long conversation, Hudson outlined ideas on Anglo-German economic co-operation in the sphere of foreign trade. He pointed out that three big regions¹ offered the two nations an immense field for economic activity: the English Empire,² China and Russia. Here agreement was possible, as also in other regions; England had no economic ambitions in the Balkans. Financial questions were also discussed; but not a loan to Germany for the conversion of her war economy to a peace economy. Herr Wohlthat got the impression that Hudson had a good grasp of the subject and was a man of bold ideas.

After this conversation with Hudson, Staatsrat Wohlthat had a second talk with Wilson, in which he had Hudson's ideas confirmed.

The fact of the Wohlthat-Hudson talk, owing to an indiscretion on the latter's part, became known to the press,

¹ "Gebiete."

² "Das englische Empire."

which played it up in a sensational manner and connected it with the rumour which had been circulating in the City and Fleet Street for some days that Britain was to grant Germany a loan of one billion pounds sterling for the conversion of the German economy to a peace footing. Hudson made some tactless comments on the subject in the Sunday newspapers which puffed the matter up still more. Here too the thirst for sensation was combined with the wish of certain British circles to nip every prospect of an understanding in the bud. However, the atmosphere did not become too bad and did not render the continuation of the talks impossible, because the Wilson-Wohlthat talks escaped the press and Berlin took the British indiscretions relatively coolly.

A few days after Herr Wohlthat's departure, the well-known and moderate Labour Party politician, Charles Roden Buxton, paid a visit to Embassy Counsellor Kordt and outlined to him in much more outspoken form ideas which had an unmistakable kinship with those expounded by Sir Horace Wilson; only they laid more stress on the political side of an Anglo-German détente than on the economic. Buxton considered a return to the methods of secret diplomacy necessary, since the peoples were so excited and the atmosphere was so overcharged that public¹ by statesmen would cause more harm than good. The way must be cleared for a political agreement by secret negotiations, as in the case of the entente with France in 1904 and the entente with Russia in 1907 (the fact that at about this time Chamberlain referred in the House of Commons to how long it had taken for the conclusion of the ententes with France and Russia seems to indicate that Buxton had

¹ There is something missing here in the original: evidently, the word "statements" or "negotiations."

discussed his ideas with official persons, or had even been inspired by them. England, Buxton went on to say, was now faced with the same problems as at that time—delimitation of Lebensraums and spheres of interest with France and Russia. Great Britain would therefore promise to respect Germany's spheres of interest in East and Southeast Europe. The consequence of this would be that England would renounce the guarantees she had given to certain States in the German sphere of interest. Further, Great Britain would bring influence to bear on France to get her to give up her alliance with the Soviet Union and her commitments in Southeast Europe. She would also drop her treaty negotiations with the Soviet Union. In return, Germany was to declare her readiness to co-operate in Europe and to agree to a general reduction of armaments. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs was informed of this conversation, as well as, it goes without saying, of the talks with Sir Horace Wilson.

In the following days the British side continued to press the suggestion that reconciliation moves be inaugurated and put the matter on official lines. After a conversation I was to have with Mr. Butler before we both went on leave fell through owing to the fact that Butler left prematurely, he let me know through Herr Kordt that Sir Horace Wilson wanted to talk with me. In order to avoid all publicity, I visited Wilson at his home on August 3 and we had a conversation which lasted nearly two hours. In the main, it followed the same lines as the Wohlthat conversations. I thought it valuable to have him confirm the proposals he had made to Wohlthat. This Wilson did, so that the authenticity of the project is beyond question.

I considered it particularly important to elucidate what connection there was between Wilson's proposals and the British encirclement policy. Again Wilson affirmed, and

in a clearer form than he had done to Wohlthat, that the conclusion of an Anglo-German entente would practically render Britain's guarantee policy nugatory. Agreement with Germany would enable Britain to extricate herself from her predicament in regard to Poland on the ground that the non-aggression pact protected Poland from German attack; England would thus be relieved of her commitments. Then Poland, so to speak, would be left to face Germany alone.

Sir Horace Wilson, on my insistence, also touched on the question of how the negotiations were to be conducted in face of the inflamed state of British public opinion, and how they were to be protected from the fate which befell the conversations with Wohlthat. He admitted quite frankly that by taking this step Chamberlain was incurring a great risk and laying himself open to the danger of a fall. But with skill and strict secrecy, the reefs could be avoided. The British Government must however be sure that its initiative met with equal readiness on the German side. There was no sense in beginning negotiations if a new crisis was in the offing. It would therefore very much like to know how the Führer had received Wohlthat's report, whether he foresaw a quiet period of negotiation in the next few months, and, lastly, whether he himself was ready to manifest a willingness for negotiations, whether by means of a public statement or confidentially. However that might be, it would be a great disappointment to the British Government if no response to the British initiative were forthcoming from our side. The only alternative would then be catastrophe.

I demurred to many of Wilson's challengeable statements: for instance, that there was an atmosphere of distrust since Prague, and that Germany was making unilateral military preparations. For the rest, I played the part of

a listener, which I had to do in any case since I had no indication of what reception Wohlthat's report of his conversations in London had found in authoritative quarters in Germany. I only knew from a personal telegram from the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs requesting to be informed of the political substance of Wohlthat's conversations, and from a telegram from the Secretary of State, that Wohlthat's report had been transmitted by Field-Marshal Goering to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs.

7) *Assessment of the Horace Wilson Démarche.* When one reviews the policy of the British Government in the summer of 1939 which led up to Sir Horace Wilson's démarche, it becomes clear that the reaction to the precipitately inaugurated, dangerous and frivolous encirclement policy was becoming stronger and stronger. It looked as if the trend in favour of a constructive policy toward Germany gathered force as the disillusionment over the negotiations with Russia grew, and finally took shape in the Chamberlain-Wilson proposals to Staatsrat Wohlthat and me. Chamberlain—so his supporters explain his attitude in home politics—had to bend to the assault of public opinion, but firmly believed it would soon come to its senses. He then considered the moment had come to take it in hand and direct it along the course he had planned—just as he had done in his Abyssinian policy. He now wanted to take advantage of the disillusionment of the politically-minded public over Russia in order to resume the policy of an adjustment with Germany.

The immense difficulties with which such an undertaking on the English side was fraught have already been mentioned: exclusion of all possibility of negotiation owing to the British statements regarding Danzig, and the inflamed state of public opinion. But, on the other hand, it should be stressed that these difficulties were taken into consid-

eration in the Sir Horace Wilson proposals (comparison with the conclusion of the ententes of 1904 and 1907; secrecy of negotiations), and that they contained practical possibilities, or at least possibilities worthy of a trial. At any rate, Chamberlain's position was strong enough to put through the project should it come to it. I was told many a time by influential persons that Chamberlain would have the electorate behind him whether his cry was "War" or "Peace." And this was undoubtedly true. What importance Chamberlain and Wilson attached to their proposals is indicated by the fact that Chamberlain was prepared to confirm them to Wohlthat, and that Wilson furthermore strongly stressed the great value the British Government laid upon a German reply and considered that slipping into war¹ was the only alternative.

The tragic and paramount thing about the rise of the new Anglo-German war was that Germany demanded an equal place with Britain as a world power and that Britain was in principle prepared to concede. But, whereas Germany demanded immediate, complete and unequivocal satisfaction of her demand, Britain—although she was ready to renounce her Eastern commitments, and therewith her encirclement policy, as well as to allow Germany a predominant position in East and Southeast Europe and to discuss genuine world political partnership² with Germany—wanted this to be done only by way of negotiation and a *gradual*³ revision of British policy. This change could be effected in a period of months, but not of days or weeks.

As regards the technicalities and atmosphere of nego-

¹ "Hineingleiten in einen Krieg."

² "Weltpolitische Partnerschaft."

³ Underscored in the original.

tiations, there was the added difficulty that at the time when the English were prepared to negotiate and to make concessions—that is, from Munich to Prague (with the exception of the interruption due to the anti-Jewish demonstrations in Germany in November)—no negotiations were initiated. After Prague came the abrupt change in British policy and in the mental attitude of the individual Briton toward Germany. The encirclement held the foreground. When Chamberlain and Wilson, in their July action, again evinced a tendency toward a détente, the European atmosphere was strongly overcharged. No practical test was made to see whether this overture still offered the chance of a peaceful solution.

8) *Reception Given to the British Offer of Negotiations in Berlin.* A week after my conversation with Sir Horace Wilson I left London. I had already in July expressed a desire to come to Berlin to report in the middle of August and to remain in Germany until the Party Congress. The Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs gave his consent. I learned later that I would have been requested to apply for leave if I had not done so myself; the same was true of Count Welczek, the Ambassador in Paris. I arrived in Berlin on Monday morning, August 13. The talks with Count Ciano at Fuschl and Obersalzberg had ended the day before. I asked the gentlemen on duty in the Ministry Chancellery to report my arrival in Berlin to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs and to ascertain if and when I should go to Fuschl to report. In reply to my inquiries in the next few days, I was told that no information on the subject had been received from the Reichsminister. I also asked Secretary of State von Weizsäcker when I could report to the Reichsminister in Fuschl. Herr von Weizsäcker intimated that he would write specially to the Reichsminister recommending that he should receive me; the Secre-

tary of State later read me the respective passage in his letter to the Reichsminister, wherein he briefly summarized what I had told him, especially as regards England's attitude in the event of a German-Polish war.

I was repeatedly told in Berlin in these days that the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs was convinced that in the event of a German-Polish war England would *not* join in on Poland's behalf. I also learned that Herr Wohlthat's report on his London conversations had been interpreted and treated more as a picture of the general mood, and that my report of my conversation with Sir Horace Wilson¹ had been taken as a further sign of Britain's weakness.

I received no reply to my application from the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. It was apparent that he had no time or no desire to hear my report, just as during the March crisis, when I was called to Berlin to report and was not received. As I felt the weight of the responsibility lying upon me, and had not the possibility of making an oral report, I decided to set forth in a short memorandum² my views on what attitude England would take in the event of a German-Polish war. I pointed out that the Polish question in itself was not decisive for England, but rather the desire to oppose any change in the balance of power on the continent in favour of Germany by unilateral action. Even if England was not committed to intervene automatically in the event of a German-Polish conflict, such intervention against us had to be considered in the highest degree probable. I sent this memorandum by registered mail to the Secretary of State on August 18, with the request to forward it to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs. This was done.³

¹ See Document No. 24.

² See Document No. 27.

³ Among Dirksen's papers were found a postal receipt showing that a registered letter was addressed to Weizsäcker on August 18.

I requested and received the Secretary of State's permission to go to Gröditzberg and there await further instructions. I left for Gröditzberg on August 16, and here composed the above-mentioned memorandum. However, my services were no longer required.

von Dirksen¹

Gröditzberg, September 1939.

Postscript. The present memorandum was composed because I considered it my duty to make a written record of Anglo-German relations as they developed during my period of service in London, in the event that the desire should arise at some future date to collect all the available material on the subject. I felt this obligation all the more keenly because just before the outbreak of the war all important documents of the London Embassy had to be burned, and because many of the details were not given in the reports to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. I have made this record from memory, having no documents at my disposal.

von Dirksen¹

¹ Signed by Dirksen personally.

nehmen werde. Ich wies darauf hin, daß die polnische Frage an sich nicht die ausschlaggebende für England sei, sondern das Bestreben einseitigen Machtverschiebungen auf dem Kontinent zugunsten Deutschlands entgegenzutreten. Wenn England daher auch nicht zu automatischem Eingreifen im Fall eines deutsch-polnischen Konflikts verpflichtet sei, so sei dieses Eingreifen gegen uns doch mit höchster Wahrscheinlichkeit anzunehmen. Diese Aufzeichnung sandte ich am 18. August mit eingeschriebenem Brief an Den Staatssekretär mit der Bitte um Weiterleitung an den RAM. Diese Weiterleitung ist dann auch erfolgt.

Ich erbat und erhielt vom Staatssekretär die Genehmigung, mich in Gröditzberg zur weiteren Verfügung zu halten. Ich reiste am 16. August hierher ab und arbeitete die eben erwähnte Denkschrift aus. Meine Dienste wurden aber dann nicht mehr in Anspruch genommen.

Gröditzberg, im September 1939.

Nachschrift. Die vorstehende Aufzeichnung habe ich angefertigt, weil ich mich für verpflichtet hielt, die Entwicklung der deutsch-englischen Beziehungen, wie sie sich während meiner Amtszeit in London vollzogen hat, schriftlich festzuhalten, für den Fall, daß später einmal der Wunsch lebendig werden sollte, über diese Frage alles verfügbare Material zu sammeln. Diese Verpflichtung lag mir um so mehr ob, als alle wichtigen Akten der Botschaft in London kurz vor Kriegsausbruch verbrannt werden mußten, und die Berichte an das A.A. manche Einzelheiten nicht enthielten. Die Niederschrift ist aus dem Kopf und ohne daß Akten zur Verfügung gestanden hätten, gefertigt worden.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

FROM DIRKSEN'S PRIVATE [UNOFFICIAL]
CORRESPONDENCE

No. 1

LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN MOSCOW DIRKSEN TO PRESIDENT
OF THE REICH ASSOCIATION OF
AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY
EMPLOYERS' FEDERATIONS WANGENHEIM

Moscow, July 22, 1931
Strictly Confidential

Dear Wangenheim,

I read an article the other day in the "Deutsche Tageszeitung" in which it was said that, if the credit negotiations in Paris and London should break down, there was no need to give up all hope, since we could then pursue a more active policy in the East.

This struck an answering chord in me; I have these past few weeks been very intently occupied with similar thoughts, and I should not like to keep them from you, even at the risk that they may seem to you still very crude and immature. We must proceed from the standpoint—

as the "Deutsche Tageszeitung" did—that we Germans must not go to the conferences in Paris and London with the feeling that if nothing comes of the negotiations then all is lost. We must rather have a ready-made plan of what to do in case the negotiations should prove abortive. This plan would roughly be as follows: if the credit negotiations should break down, Germany's public and private credit would sink to zero; the mark would heavily decline, or not be quoted at all; foreign credits would continue to be withdrawn, and panic in the country would correspondingly increase. In face of this, the Government would have to adopt even far more incisive measures than hitherto; the existing ordinances would naturally have to be kept in force. Since the continued maintenance of a high bank and discount rate, coupled with the credit stringency,¹ would completely ruin our economy, and since these measures, strictly speaking, were taken only in order to recover the confidence of the foreign money markets, there will be no need to persist in them if there is no longer any prospect of winning foreign confidence—and that would precisely be the case after the collapse of the credit negotiations. If, then, the raising of the discount rate leads to too ruinous consequences and, on the other hand, does not eliminate the shortage of payment media, we would probably revert to methods which have at present—and rightly—been abandoned, and put substitute payment media, e. g., Rentenbank notes, into circulation. This would sooner or later lead to the creation of an internal currency, which as far as possible would be secured by gold, but which would be left without substantial gold cover should gold be lacking. Settlements with foreign countries would then be made in gold currency. All this is exact-

¹ "Im Zusammenhang mit der Kreditdistrikion."

ly what has been done here. If such an internal currency should be created, side by side with the gold currency intended for foreign trade, still stricter government control will be necessary than that so far imposed upon foreign exchange transactions. Purchase and sale of foreign exchange would have to be made exclusively through a central government office, and only for the most urgent needs. Parallel with this, similar strict control would have to be exercised with regard to raw materials and other commodities which we need from abroad. Exports must be increased to the utmost, in order to secure the maximum foreign exchange; exports would also have to be strictly controlled in order to be able to keep a check on the inflow of foreign exchange.

Control of exports and imports is nothing else than a monopoly of foreign trade; and we shall of course have to resort to this, just as any State which cannot permit itself the luxury of importing everything that its citizens fancy.

The foreign trade monopoly would of course provide us with all the possibilities which the Soviet Government derives from it; above all, we would be able to make our purchases where it suits us, without being accused of violating the most favoured nation clause contained in some of the trade agreements.

This brings me to Eastern policy. If a big loan does not materialize, we shall naturally have to strive not only to maintain our export trade with our present purchasers, but to increase it to the utmost, even if it involves dumping. But we must in addition elucidate every imaginable possibility of increasing our export trade, in order to reduce the number of unemployed and to infuse new blood into our economy. *But all this can only be done by extending our economic relations with the Soviet Union.* We have hitherto

been unable to make full use of the enormous export potentialities which have been available to us in this past year—how long they will continue nobody knows—because we could not advance the Soviet Government the necessary credits, that is, because we were not rich enough to finance this business. But such financing will become superfluous when we allow the Soviet Union to pay us not in money but in goods. And we can allow it to pay us in goods immediately we institute a foreign trade monopoly. Then we shall not need to go all over the world for our oil, for instance, and allied products, but can cover all our requirement in Russia, and to this extent increase our exports over and above our present credit potentialities. The same is true of a number of other products, e. g., timber, wheat, maize, cotton, etc., which we import from other countries without corresponding exports.

I fully realize that direct bargaining to a value of hundreds of millions cannot be transacted over the counter. It not only requires time, it also has to be financed. But if we abandon the gold standard and introduce an internal currency, this Russian business could be financed with the help of a special type of security, whether we call them treasury bills, Russian finance bonds, or by any other name. These securities would be put into circulation to the amount of current business, and then—each time to the amount of the completed transaction—withdrawn.

This is one aspect of activity in Russia. Another is that we could to an entirely different extent than formerly, and without the false fear of being frowned upon by Western Europe, satisfy the demand here for workers of all kinds, skilled and unskilled. This is a question in itself, about which very much could be said; I shall here confine myself only to this remark. At any rate, I am convinced that here we have extraordinarily big opportunities for placing

people, and that there is absolutely no need to plunge these people into utter poverty.

It is after all an absurdity that, on the one hand, there is a continent like Russia, which is crying out for goods of all kinds, machines, etc., and which experiences an extreme need for manpower, and that, on the other, there is a country like Germany which has an overproduction of such goods and manpower—yet the demand and the supply cannot be brought together.

Time is pressing, and so I will conclude. As you see, I am by no means an utter pessimist. Ways can always be found. However, I am not even so terribly pessimistic about the outcome of the negotiations in Paris and London, because we have the strongest negotiating position imaginable: the negotiating position of a debtor who has caded not less than 25 billion marks and whose collapse would spell the ruin of his creditors.

I myself am doing quite well and have not yet had a relapse.

With best greetings to yourself and your wife,

I am, yours,

[Dirksen]

No. 2

LETTER FROM F. STUMM
TO GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN LONDON
DIRKSEN

F. von STUMM¹

*Rauisch-Holzhausen
Kreis Marburg (Lahn)
May 2, 1938*

Dear Dirksen,

About Sir N. S. S., I should like to add that he is thoroughly pro-Franco² and thoroughly anti-Semitic. He has a soft spot for us and is at least objective.

Besides him, please convey the best greetings of my wife and myself to the Vansittarts. He is not so anti-German as he is always said to be. But to the Cabinet he seemed, as I definitely know, too pro-French, that is, he was too much under the charm of the French style of diplomacy and of handling European affairs. For that reason he was, so to speak, removed from the Foreign Office and can no longer rely on its apparatus. But since he is extraordinarily intelligent and in addition enormously industrious, his influence as a political adviser³ is not to be underrated.

¹ Private letterhead.

² "Ausgesprochen pro-Franco."

³ The words "political adviser" are in English.

On the whole you will find that, in spite of Austria, the man in the street¹ is still in favour of good relations with us and cannot stand the French. The anti-German influence of the press is not half as great as people here are disposed to think.

That the Government keeps on good terms with the French, and in this way "safeguards" the Channel ports, is accepted by the Englishman as right, but without sympathy. That it is—at last, so it seems—imposing its political will on France, can only please him, since he has long been fed up with the running after Paris. The marked Jewish influence in Britain is worrying many Englishmen, and our handling of the Jewish problem is therefore no longer exciting so very much feeling. The Church question is a different matter, but here there is room for propaganda. For the actions of the Archbishop of Canterbury and others in the matter of the King,² as well as of foreign policy, have touched all sorts of Englishmen on the raw and made them more sensitive to the possibility of the clergy mixing too much in politics. Moreover, the Englishman is beginning to get definitely slack in the matter of Sunday churchgoing, even in the countryside—feeling for the Church is noticeably cooling off.

Well, I wish you good luck in your not unfavourable terrain, improvement of your Japanese health³ and our meeting perhaps in London. If not in autumn, then later!

With best greetings also to your wife,

Yours,

*Fr. Stumm*⁴

¹ The words "man in the street" are in English.

² The reference is to the Archbishop of Canterbury's statement in December 1936 on the abdication of King Edward VIII.

³ "Besserung Ihrer japanischen Gesundheit."

⁴ Signed by Stumm personally.

No. 3

LETTER FROM GERMAN MINISTER IN CAIRO
OW-WACHENDORF TO GERMAN
AMBASSADOR IN LONDON DIRKSEN

GERMAN LEGATION ¹

Cairo, May 19, 1938

Dear. Dirksen,

....² There is naturally much talk here about Czechia. However, there is no question of a war psychosis. British officers and diplomatists are making their plans for the summer with amazing coolness. Many think of going to Germany. A circular order from the War Office is supposed to have recommended the officers not to go to Austria. But this is presumably an old instruction from the March days and long out of date. It is said in the German colony that the officers have been ordered to restrict their intercourse with Germans. This seems strange to me, because such intercourse was never very great. Toward us the officers are as friendly as ever, and I am quite a frequenter of the casinos. There I have been able to convince myself that there

¹ Legation letterhead.

² The introductory part of the letter, which is of a private character, is omitted.

Deutsche Gesandtschaft

Kairo, den 19. Mai 1938.

Lieber Dirksen!

Die schönen Bilder haben uns viel Freude gemacht. Sie sind uns eine liebe Erinnerung. Ihre Tätigkeit in London verfolgen wir mit leidenschaftlichem Interesse. Mein verstimmltes Telegramm, das Ihnen eine "erotische" Antwort auf das Angebot Prüfers nahelegte, war sicherlich ein gutes Vorzeichen. -

Hier wird naturgemäß über die Tschechei viel gesprochen. Von einer Kriegspsychose kann aber nicht die Rede sein. Die englischen Offiziere und Diplomaten machen mit verblüffender Ruhe ihre Sommerpläne. Viele wollen nach Deutschland. Angeblich soll den Offizieren durch einen Rundbefehl des War Office nahegelegt worden sein, nicht nach Oesterreich zu fahren. Dies ist aber vermutlich eine längst überholte Weisung aus den Märsen. In der deutschen Kolonie erzählt man sich, die Offiziere hätten die Weisung erhalten, ihren deutschen Verkehr einzuschränken. Dies kommt mir sonderbar vor, denn ein solcher Verkehr hat sowieso kaum stattgefunden. Gegen uns sind die Offiziere nach wie vor von größter Freundlichkeit, und ich verkehre viel in den

Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 3,
Appendix I

die Engländer. Die Letzteren haben allerdings immer eine Abneigung, sich mit Dingen zu befassen, die noch nicht aktuell sind.

Auf militärischem Gebiete sind die Engländer hier recht rührig. Nachdem die grossen Manöver in der Wüste recht blamabel ausgegangen sind, hetzt man die verschiedenen Einheiten dort jetzt ständig herum. Grosse Sorge bereitet ihnen die Tatsache, dass die innerpolitische Dauerkrise einen wirklichen Fortschritt der ägyptischen Aufrüstung bisher verhindert.

Ich nehme an, dass es Ihnen recht ist, wenn ich Ihnen gelegentlich ein kurzes Stimmungsbild von hier sende. Auf das anglo-ägyptische Verhältnis komme ich demnächst in einem zusammenfassenden Bericht zurück.

Mit herrlichen Grüssen von Haus zu Haus
stets Ihr

O. W. Wachsmuth

is strikingly little talk of a coming war, whereas only in February everybody was saying, without enmity, but with dumb resignation, that a conflict was inevitable.

You may perhaps be interested in a talk that I had yesterday with Smart and his wife. He is First Oriental Secretary, with the rank of Embassy Counsellor. He is a clever man; according to Harold Nicolson he is one of the best brains in the British service.

Mrs. Smart said to me in the course of a conversation, in which her husband took an active part:

"It is a pity you did not move into Prague at the same time as you entered Vienna. In any case, if you move at all, I hope you will do it soon, for in two months' time the situation in London might be much less favourable."¹

So far I have observed no war preparations on the part of the British military. On the other hand, I heard that Herriot, in a narrow circle shortly after the dinner at the British Embassy, expressed himself extremely pessimistically, and stressed the unbreakable solidarity with the Czechs. My information was however so vague that I did not venture to pass it on. All the Frenchmen here look much more worried than the British. The latter, after all, have never been inclined to concern themselves with things which are not of actual moment.

In the military field, the British here are very active. Ever since the big manoeuvres in the desert ended so dismally, the various units are being driven about there all the time. They are deeply troubled by the fact that the protracted domestic political crisis is still preventing any real headway being made in the matter of Egyptian armament.

¹ The passage in quotation marks is given in English.

I presume you will not object if I occasionally give you a brief description of the state of feeling here. On the subject of Anglo-Egyptian relations I shall soon be sending you a comprehensive report.

With cordial greetings,

Always yours,

*Ow-Wachendorf*¹

¹ Signed by Ow-Wachendorf personally.

No. 4

**LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN LONDON DIRKSEN TO GERMAN MINISTER
IN CAIRO OW-WACHENDORF**

Copy
June 1, 1938

Minister Baron von Ow-Wachendorf,
German Legation,
Cairo

Dear Ow,

Many thanks for your letter of May 19. Your political observations interested me keenly and were very valuable to me, since they are a confirmation from afar of the atmosphere here and in a way reflect it more clearly.

In particular, it was very important for me to learn from your letter that on the whole calmness prevails among British military circles in Egypt and that the war nervousness which was to be observed here in the week-end of May 21-23 did not extend there. Here too a calmer atmosphere has supervened in the meantime, partly owing to a more correct assessment of our conduct, and partly to a more sceptical evaluation of the Czechs and their alarmist reports. Unfortunately, the nervousness here was very considerably enhanced by the behaviour of the British Embassy in Berlin, especially of Henderson himself, who seems to have rather lost his nerve and to have recommended the womenfolk of the Berlin Embassy and of the British journalists to return to England as soon as possible because the situation was

critical. This was naturally taken in bad part by us, as was also, on the other hand, the fact that Henderson's foes here in the Foreign Office took advantage of it to agitate against him in the press. It would be very regrettable if it were to lead to the removal of this man, who is so ready for reconciliation and is determined actively to work for it.

The whole situation in respect to Czechoslovakia is now regarded more tranquilly. There is always the possibility, of course, of a local outbreak in the form of shooting affairs as the result of Czech provocation. If no such incident occurs it is to be hoped that the British, and also the French, will not relax their pressure on the Czech Government; in that case the prospects of negotiation with the Sudeten Germans for the granting of full civil equality and autonomy will be somewhat better.

Another significant political event in the past week was the debate on air armament in the House of Commons and the reconstruction of the Cabinet which it has necessitated. It was particularly interesting from the standpoint of relations with us, inasmuch as it revealed the extraordinary irritability and nervousness of the public here in respect to everything which might indicate inferiority in air armament compared with us. Official circles still hold aloof from these trends, and I believe that they still desire an adjustment with Germany. The Czechoslovak crisis had at least this advantage that it shook up politically-minded circles and revealed to them the danger of war inherent in the Sudeten German problem. This goes hand in hand with a disinclination to become involved in warlike adventures on account of Czechoslovakia. . . .¹

[Dirksen]

¹ The concluding part of the letter is of a private character.

(P1)

den 1. Juni 1938.

Lieber Ow.

Haben Sie vielen Dank für Ihren Brief vom 19. Mai. Ihre politischen Beobachtungen haben mich lebhaft interessiert und waren mir sehr wertvoll, da sie die hiesige Atmosphäre aus der Entfernung bestätigen und in manchem klarer wiedergeben.

Insbesondere war es mir sehr wichtig, aus Ihrem Brief zu sehen, dass im allgemeinen in den dortigen englischen militärischen Kreisen Ruhe herrscht und die Kriegsnervosität des hiesigen Wochenendes vom 21. bis 23. Mai sich nicht nach Ägypten übertragen hat. Auch hier hat inzwischen eine ruhigere Atmosphäre Platz gegriffen, teils auf Grund einer richtigeren Würdigung unserer Haltung, teils auf Grund einer skeptischeren Beurteilung der Tschechen und ihrer Alarmnachrichten. Leider ist die hiesige Nervosität in ganz entscheidender Weise gesteigert worden durch die Haltung der Berliner englischen Botschaft, insbesondere Henderson selbst, der wohl etwas die Nerven verloren hatte und den Frauen der Berliner Botschaft und der dortigen englischen Journalisten die baldige Rückkehr nach England wegen der kritischen Lage empfahl. Das ist von uns natürlich übel vermerkt worden, wie andererseits die hiesigen Gegner Hendersons in der Foreign Office das...

Herrn Gesandten Baron von Ow-Wachendorf

Deutsche Gesandtschaft

Kairo

Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 4.
Appendix I

15

jedenfalls den einen Vorteil gehabt, dass sie die politisch
denkenden Kreise aufgerüttelt und ihnen die Kriegsgefähr-
lichkeit des sudetendeutschen Problems gezeigt hat; damit
zugleich geht die Abneigung, sich wegen der Tschechoslowakei
in kriegerische Abenteuer einzulassen, Hand in Hand.

Gesundheitlich ist es mit bisher gut gegangen trotz der
vielseitigsten Anstrengungen, denen ich ausgesetzt gewesen
bin. An die schönen Tage in Kairo und in Ägypten denken
wir noch oft zurück; sie waren die letzten Erholungstage
vor anstrengenden und verantwortungsvollen Monaten.

Ihnen und Ihrer Gattin viele herzliche Grüße von
meiner Frau und mir.

Mit Heil Hitler!

bin ich

stets Ihr

(Haken)

APPENDIX II

REPORTS OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR IN PARIS
WELCZEK

No. 1

LETTER FROM GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN PARIS WELCZEK TO FOREIGN MINISTER
NEURATH

GERMAN EMBASSY
PARIS¹

Paris, December 26, 1936

A 99

In reference to telegraphic report
of 24 inst.—No. 794

Dear Baron Neurath,

During the conference of Chiefs of Missions in Nuremberg I held the view that if we energetically press even part of the proposals made by the Führer on March 7 and adapt our mode of action to the European rules of the game, we should very soon be sitting at the conference table, and in all probability could secure the satisfaction of many of our wishes, including those in the colonial field. I still adhere to this view and am optimistic regarding its success, provided we do not drive our demands too far.

¹ Embassy letterhead.

I have lately been speaking to a number of foreigners who are extremely well disposed toward us, most of them diplomats. They are unanimously of the opinion that if we persist in our fait-accompli policy, by which we are keeping the world in a constant state of agitation, our opponents will have no alternative but to arm themselves with all energy against the supposed disturber of the peace, Germany, and, in view of their incomparably more favourable economic and financial position, all the advantages will be with them. This would definitely lead to war, in which we could just as little count upon the Italians as in 1914.

I do not know whether or for how long we can stand an armament race with the Great Powers opposed to us. If we cannot do so for long, and since it is to be presumed that our opponents will get to learn about the foreign exchange and raw material shortage we are increasingly experiencing, it would be a great tactical error if we did not in good time, and before the British complete their air armament, sit down to the conference table. Foreigners well informed about German affairs are even of the opinion that our present situation is desperately similar to that of the summer of 1918, and not only with respect to shortage of raw materials, but also as regards determination to see it through. Time is not on our side, since the discrepancy between our opponents' potentialities for armament and ours will become more and more evident with the lapse of time, and then our situation as regards an understanding will be ever more unfavourable.

I have repeatedly reported that, notwithstanding all the slaps in the face the French have received in the past year, they are even now ready to negotiate with a view to an understanding. That they were not willing right after receiving a slap in the face to agree even to the most

Deutsche Wochenschrift Paris.

A 99

Unter Benennung auf Drahterleicht
vom 24. J.M. - Nr. 794 -

Paris, den 25. Dezember 1936.

Herrn Baron Neurath,

Bei unserer Missionsschiff-Besprechung in Würzburg habe ich die Ansicht vertreten, daß wir bei einem ernsthaften Abgebot, auch nur eines Teiles der von Führer am 7. März gemachten Vorschläge und Anpassung unserer Aktionsweise an die europäischen Spielregeln in kürzester Zeit am Verhandlungstisch sitzen und mit großer Wahrscheinlichkeit viele unserer Wünsche, auch auf kolonialen Gebiet, durchsetzen könnten. Ich vertrete diesen Standpunkt auch noch heute und bin hinsichtlich des Erfolges optimistisch, vorausgesetzt, daß wir unsere Forderungen nicht überspannen.

Ich habe in letzter Zeit eine Reihe uns durchaus wohlgesinnter Ausländer, meist Diplomaten gesprochen, die übereinstimmend der Ansicht waren, daß bei einer Fortsetzung unserer fait-accompli-Politik, durch die wir die Welt dauernd in Aufregung halten, unseren Gegnern nichts anderes übrig bliebe, als gegen den vermeintlichen Störenfried Deutschland mit allen Kräften aufzurufen, wobei sie angesichts ihrer unvergleichlich günstigeren Wirtschafts- und Finanzlage wohl am längeren Hebel sitzen dürften. Dann käme es bestimmt zum Kriege, in dem wir auf die Italiener wohl ebenso wenig zählen könnten wie im Jahre 1914.

Es entzieht sich meiner Kenntnis, ob und wie lange wir in der Lage sind, einen Rüstungswettkampf mit den uns gegenüberstehenden Großmächten durchzuhalten. Wenn wir dies auf die Dauer aber nicht können und anzunehmen ist, daß unsere Gegner den bei uns immer mehr in Erscheinung tretenden Mangel an Devisen und Rohstoffen erkennen, so wäre es ein schwerer taktischer Fehler, uns nicht rechtzeitig und vordem die Engländer mit ihrer Aufrüstung fertig sind, an den Verhandlungstisch

Wisch

Photostatic copy of first page of Document No. 1,
Appendix II

alluring proposals, is psychologically understandable. Now the situation is reversed. It is not the Führer who is extending his hand for an understanding, but the French that are offering their hand to us; the slapped is extending his hand to the slapper. But the slapped is also more sensitive as to the way his offer is received and to how long it takes before it is answered; the longer the answer is delayed, the more difficult will the situation become for the offerer, and the more unfavourable the atmosphere. This circumstance is of the greatest importance here. Opportunities come and go. I doubt whether the present still favourable opportunity for an understanding can continue for long, and am of the opinion that the moment has come when the only remaining choice for us is an understanding or a policy which must lead to isolation. If we are dilatory in our answer to the French overture, our opponents will certainly assume that we want to sabotage it. That we must seek in the negotiations to secure the optimum and maximum, goes without saying.

For many years I used to believe that an understanding with France could be achieved only through Britain. But since I have seen that, contrary to all British tradition, an ideology of animosity toward the Third Reich plays an important, often even a decisive, role in British public opinion, even in the case of Eden, I have given up my former opinion. Russia will scarcely succeed in deterring France from an effort to achieve understanding once it has been begun and promises success; nevertheless Moscow is working assiduously, because it knows very well that in the event of a German-French rapprochement, the Franco-Russian treaty would be gradually reduced in value to the level of the Rapallo treaty. That was the expression Delbos used in our last conversation.

I should now like to analyze what were the primary

reasons that induced the French Government to make us this peace overture. If we consider the sum total of factors essential for a successful war, it must be admitted that France's position today is strong. In the opinion of our military experts, armament and defensive measures in France have lately been pushed with extraordinary intensity, and have now reached a level never attained here before. The danger of a Communist revolution, in which well-informed people never believed, now seems to have been banished; at any rate, no one doubts that in the event of a war with Germany the Communists will fight with even greater enthusiasm than the Rights. In the event of an armed conflict with us, Russia will preach a holy war against the "stranglers of liberty," which will result in an influx of countless Communist volunteers from all parts of the world. Moreover, the old resentment toward us will immediately revive all over the world to an even greater extent than in the world war. Another item on France's credit side is Britain's unambiguous declaration that she will support France with every means in her power. America, too, at the crucial moment will scarcely act differently than in the last war. At any rate, it is asserted here in circles close to the Quai d'Orsay that Roosevelt's speech in Buenos Aires must be taken to mean that in the event of an unprovoked German attack on France, America will assist the latter as she did in 1917.

After this analysis, the French overture can scarcely be taken as a sign of weakness, even though the readiness of the French for negotiation was certainly prompted in the first place by our armament, which they regard as a standing menace. For better or for worse, they want to put an end to the present state of alarm and uncertainty, which hampers all economic progress and, hence, the consolidation of the internal political situation. This is the

main line of Léon Blum's policy, while the direct motive for the overtures to us is to be sought in the desire to liquidate the Spanish adventure at a moment comparatively favourable to the Reds—after having tacitly permitted numerous Rotfront volunteers to cross the frontier and the transit of large quantities of war materials.

It is a noteworthy fact that the overtures for an understanding come from a Popular Front Cabinet and a Jewish Prime Minister, who is being most severely attacked for it by the Lefts. If we reject this overture, which well-informed persons say will be the last, the conclusion must necessarily be drawn that we want to attack France. Our opponents will then lay the blame on us, and take advantage of it in order, in view of the war which is regarded as inevitable, to completely isolate us and to cut off our supplies of raw material as far as possible.

It is the universally prevalent rumour here, and one which was purveyed by François-Poncet only several months ago, that we are bound to suffer economic collapse in the second half of 1937, and that we shall, in order to divert popular opinion, precipitate a war before that. Another version has it that after landing big troop detachments in Spain and reinforcing our air squadrons there, we shall start a war on two fronts against France even now, and that this time we shall march not through Belgium, but through Switzerland. There can be no doubt that these fantastic rumours chiefly originate in the Soviet Embassy here. The regrettable thing is that they are believed even by serious people.

Last week Blum invited me to come and see him in order to dispel the bad feeling which, the French Ambassador in Berlin reports, was said to have been caused in Germany by the failure of the Schacht overture. At the same time, he gave an interview to a reporter which I take the liberty

of inclosing herewith. In the early part of December, Delbos delivered the speech on French foreign policy which attracted so much attention, and which he intended to be the first move toward an understanding. On the 11th inst. he invited our Chargé d'Affaires and made the already known declaration, to which we have so far not given a reply; on the 24th inst. I had a long talk with the Foreign Minister, in which he confirmed and enlarged on the statements made to Embassy Counsellor Forster.

As a preliminary condition for the beginning of negotiations, joint action on the question of non-intervention in Spain is envisaged, which is to be followed by an era of peace, brought about by moral disarmament. The French attach paramount importance to the creation of such an atmosphere of peace and confidence, without which negotiations would be valueless. The next phase is to be the beginning of negotiations, which might be preceded by confidential discussions. The normal diplomatic way is preferred here, which in the view of French Government circles has the advantage that it is not conspicuous and can more easily be kept secret.

The urgent and decisive first step, it is considered here, is to gradually extinguish the Spanish conflagration.¹ Our attitude towards this is to be, so to speak, the touchstone of our readiness for subsequent negotiations. We must be clear in our minds whether the further sending of volunteers and war materials to Spain is worth the collapse of the French overtures for an understanding. It goes without saying that the Italians in the first place, as a Mediterranean Power, and then we, as the next interested, must do everything we can to prevent Franco's defeat. But if it is our intention in any case gradually to wind up the Spanish under-

¹ "Brandherd."

taking, we could make a virtue of necessity and advantageously utilize this favourable coincidence as the beginning of a move for an understanding.

I learn from unimpeachable sources that Blum and Delbos are being very strongly attacked on account of their overtures to us by the radical Lefts who take their instructions from the Soviets, who sabotage every move toward an understanding, and who would like to overthrow Blum and Delbos because of their démarche. Since it is in our interest to keep these two intelligent and honest men at the helm of state, it would be expedient not to keep the French waiting too long. A protracted delay of our reply would certainly be taken here as an affront.

With the German greeting, Heil Hitler,

I remain,

Yours faithfully,

*Welczek*¹

P. S. I have to supplement my telegraphic report of my conversation with Foreign Minister Delbos with the answer I gave to his proposals. I said that the Führer and Reichskanzler had repeatedly stretched out his hand to the French people for an understanding and made overtures of peace, but without result. At that time the saying was coined in our country that an outstretched hand may in the end grow tired. To this Delbos replied that since he had been Foreign Minister he had received no overtures. As to the overtures made last year, they came at a time when the atmosphere was not favourable for a peace move; such an atmosphere was however one of the preliminary conditions for success.

¹ Signed by Welczek personally.

No. 2

**REPORT OF GERMAN AMBASSADOR
IN PARIS WELCZEK TO THE GERMAN
FOREIGN OFFICE**

Copy Pol. II 546

GERMAN EMBASSY

PARIS

A 658

Paris, February 18, 1939

1 inclosure

4 copies

Foreign Office,
Berlin

POLITICAL REPORT

I took advantage of the conversations I had last week with Foreign Minister Bonnet on the subject of the deportations and arrests of Germans to carry out the instruction given me by the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs to convey to Bonnet our surprise at the fact that, during the foreign policy debate in the Chamber of Deputies, he had spoken about fostering and as far as possible extending French friendships in East and Middle Europe, and had thereby created the impression, among the Czechs and the Poles, for example, that the policy of encircling Germany was

Auswärtiges Amt

Pol. II 546

Berlin, den 8. März 1939

A 483

Abschriftlich nebst 1 Anlage

der

Deutschen Botschaft in London

Brüssel

Rom (Quir.)

San Sebastian

Moskau

Warschau

Deutschen Gesandtschaft in Belgrad

Budapest

Bukarest

Prag

-je besonders-

im Anschluß an den Erlaß vom 26. Januar 1939 -Pol. II 258-
zur Kenntnisnahme übersandt.

Im Auftrag

Winkelmann

Winkelmann

Winkelmann
Winkelmann
Winkelmann

Photostatic copy of instructions for distribution, attached
to Document No. 2, Appendix II

Abschrift Pol. II 546

Deutsche Botschaft

Paris

A 658

1 Anlage

4 Durchschläge

Paris, den 18. Februar 1939

Politischer Bericht.

Bei Gelegenheit der Rücksprachen, die ich in der vergangenen Woche mit dem Außenminister Bonnet über Ausweisungen und Inhaftierungen von Deutschen hatte, entledigte ich mich auch des mir seitens des Herrn Reichsministers des Auswärtigen erteilten Auftrages, Bonnet unser Befremden darüber zum Ausdruck zu bringen, daß er in der außenpolitischen Kammerdebatte von der Pflege und womöglich Erweiterung der französischen Freundschaften in Ost- und Mitteleuropa gesprochen und dadurch beispielsweise bei den Tschechen und Polen den Eindruck einer Wiederaufnahme der gegen Deutschland gerichteten Einkreisungspolitik hervorgerufen habe. Dieser Rückfall in die sog. Benes-Politik sei für uns unerträglich.

Bonnet widersprach sehr lebhaft und erinnerte an die mir vor seiner Rede in der Deputiertenkammer gegebenen Erklärungen, cf. Drahtbericht vom 24. Januar Nr. 30. Man könne doch, meinte er, alte Freundschaften pflegen und diese wirtschaftlich und kulturell ausbauen, ohne dem schon durch seine geopolitische Lage bevorzugten Deutschen Reich im Osten und Südosten in die Quere zu kommen. Dieses gleiche gute Recht werde Deutschland sicherlich in Spanien für sich in Anspruch nehmen, sobald dort Ruhe und Ordnung wieder hergestellt seien. Er bitte mich, dem Herrn Reichsminister des Auswärtigen die betreffende Stelle aus seiner Senatsrede über die französische Außenpolitik

zu

being resumed. This reversion to the so-called Beneš policy was intolerable to us.

Bonnet replied very animatedly,¹ and reminded me of what he had told me before his speech in the Chamber of Deputies (see telegraphic report of January 24, No. 30). One could cherish old friendships, he said, and extend them economically and culturally, without falling foul of the German Reich, which was already in a privileged position in the East and Southeast owing to its geopolitical position. Germany would undoubtedly claim similar rights in Spain as soon as peace and order were restored there. He requested me to convey to the Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs the corresponding passages from his Senate speech on French foreign policy, to which it would seem difficult to take exception. Things were often said in foreign policy debates in the Chamber which were obviously intended for the domestic forum² and had no significance outside. When a French Foreign Minister had gone through fire and water to win recognition for our, in his opinion, justified claims to the Sudeten German territory, and had drawn mental conclusions from the changed situation in Central Europe, it could not rightly be expected of him that he should abdicate all along the line in the Chamber too. If he did this, the warmongers would only get the upper hand, would accuse him of weakness and vainglory in the matter of the German-French agreement, and assert that he attached greater importance to it than Germany, where not a single word was said about the agreement in the Führer's speech of January 30.

¹ The words "Bonnet replied very animatedly" are underscored in blue pencil.

² The words "obviously intended for the domestic forum" are underscored in blue pencil.

I replied that we could only form our opinion from the effect his foreign policy speech had had abroad, and this was prejudicial to our interests in the East and Southeast.

The part of Bonnet's Senate speech to which he referred I humbly inclose herewith.¹

Signed: *Welczek*

¹ To the copy of Welczek's report is attached an excerpt from Bonnet's speech, quoted from the "Journal Officiel," No. 14, February 8, 1939, p. 103. Bonnet's declaration of France's readiness to defend the "legacy of our forefathers," her "interests" and her "friendly ties" were applauded, after which Bonnet said: "But since France is striving to safeguard her own property, good sense commands her to maintain as courteous and confiding relations as possible with neighbour nations."

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- ARNOLD, SYDNEY: Baron; joined Labour Party, 1922; Under Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1924; Paymaster-General, 1929-31; resigned from Labour Party, 1938, on account of disagreement with its foreign policy.—100
- ASHTON-GWATKIN, FRANK: British diplomatist; Counsellor at Foreign Office, 1934. Was sent to Czechoslovakia with Lord Runciman's mission in 1938. Political Adviser to the Ministry of Economic Warfare, 1939; Deputy Under Secretary of State at Foreign Office, 1940-44.—57
- ASQUITH, HERBERT HENRY: Lord; Leader of Liberal Party; Prime Minister, 1908-16.—41
- ATTOLICO, BERNARDO: Italian diplomatist; Ambassador to Germany, 1935-40; then to the Vatican.—132
- BALDWIN, STANLEY: Member of the British Conservative Party; Prime Minister and First Lord of the Treasury, 1924-29, and 1935-37.—162
- BARTLETT, VERNON: Diplomatic Correspondent of the newspaper "News Chronicle"; Founder and Editor of "World Review."—87
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BIELFELD, HARALD: German diplomatist; First Secretary of the German Embassy in London, 1935-38; in 1939 official in the German Foreign Office.—50

BLUM, LÉON: Right Socialist; leader of the French Socialist Party; Prime Minister of France, 1936-37; Vice-Premier, 1937-38; Prime Minister and Minister of Finance, March-April 1938.—28, 223, 225

BONNET, GEORGES: French Minister of Foreign Affairs in the Daladier Cabinet, 1938-39.—226, 231, 232

BRAUCHITSCH, WALTHER von: Nazi Field-Marshal; Commander-in-Chief of the Hitler German Army, 1938-41.—65

BROCKET, ARTHUR: Baron; in 1938-44, member of various committees of the House of Lords.—52, 100

BUCCLEUCH, WALTER: Duke; Governor of the Royal Bank of Scotland; Lord Steward of H. M. Household, 1937-40.—100

BURCKARDT, KARL: League of Nations High Commissioner for Danzig, 1937-39.—126

BURGIN, EDWARD LESLIE: British Minister of Transport, 1937-39; Minister of Supply, 1939-40.—178

BUTLER, RICHARD AUSTEN: British Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1938-41.—117, 177, 178, 186

BUXTON, CHARLES RODEN: British writer and journalist; Member of Labour Party; Parliamentary Adviser to Labour Party.—103-106, 109-112, 119, 185, 186

CADOGAN, Sir ALEXANDER: British diplomatist; Deputy Under Secretary of State at Foreign Office, 1936-37; Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1938-46.—77, 155

CAZALET, VICTOR: British Member of Parliament.—100

CHAMBERLAIN, NEVILLE: Leader of the British Conservative Party; big capitalist; Prime Minister, 1937-40.—27, 29-33, 36, 39, 40, 46, 50, 50-53, 66, 68, 83, 84, 87, 90, 106, 111, 112, 114, 117, 120, 121, 127, 130, 139, 141, 151, 156-160, 162, 163, 165, 168-171, 177-180, 183-185, 187-190

CHATFIELD, ALFRED: Baron; British Admiral of the Fleet; First Sea Lord and Chief of Naval Staff, 1933-38; chairman of a commission of experts on the defence of India, 1938-39; Minister for Co-ordination of Defence, 1939-40.—177, 178

CHILDS, Sir WYNDHAM: British General; Served in the First World War; retired, 1922.—100

CHODACKI, MARIAN: Polish diplomatist; Commissioner-General of the Polish Republic in Danzig, 1937-39.—126

CHURCHILL, WINSTON SPENCER: Leader of the British Conservative Party; from 1937 to 1939 held no government post; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1939-40; Prime Minister, 1940-45.—30, 74, 160, 180

CIANO, GALEAZZO: Italian Foreign Minister, 1936-43; Membro del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo, since 1939.—132, 190

COOPER, ALFRED DUFF: British Secretary of State for War, 1935-37; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1937-38; Minister of Information, 1940-41; Minister Without Portfolio, 1941-43; British Representative to the French Committee of National Liberation, 1943-44; Ambassador to France, 1944-47.—87, 160, 161, 171, 180

CRANFIELD, ARTHUR LESLIE: Managing Editor of "The Daily Mail."—15, 19

DALADIER, EDOUARD: A leader of the French Radical-Socialist Party; Minister of National Defence and Vice-Premier, 1936-37; Prime Minister, Minister of National Defence and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1938-40.—153

DALTON, HUGH: Labour Member of Parliament; Parliamentary Under Secretary at Foreign Office, 1929-31; Chairman National Executive of the British Labour Party, 1936-37; Minister of Economic Warfare, 1940-42; President of the Board of Trade, 1942-45; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1945-47.—120

DAWSON, GEOFFREY: Editor of the "Times," 1912-19; and again in 1923-41.—98, 100

DEAKIN, RALPH: Correspondent of the "Times."—100

DÉAT MARCEL: French journalist; Nazi agent.—141

DELBOS, YVON: A leader of the French Radical-Socialist Party; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1936-37; and in March-April 1938.—221, 224, 225

DIETRICH, OTTO: Secretary of State in the Ministry for Propaganda and Press Chief in the Nazi government, 1937-45.—114

DIRKSEN, HERBERT von: German diplomatist; big landowner; Ambassador to Moscow, November 1928-August 1933; Ambassador to Japan, September 1933-February 1938; Ambassador to England, March 31, 1938-September 3, 1939.—5-7, 15, 19, 20, 26, 35, 36, 38, 42, 45, 49, 57-59, 66, 67, 72, 73, 76-78, 88-91, 95, 101, 102, 104-106, 113, 115, 116, 125, 126, 131, 132, 135-137, 143, 144, 148, 160, 192, 197, 201, 204, 211, 212

EDEN, ROBERT ANTHONY: British Conservative Leader; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1935-38; Secretary of State for Dominion Affairs, 1939-40; Secretary of State for War, 1940, and Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1940-45, in Churchill's Cabinet.—29, 30, 84, 151, 160, 180, 221

FORSTER, D.: German diplomatist; Counsellor at the German Embassy in Paris, 1932-37.—224

FRANCO, FRANCISCO: Head of the rebel fascist government in Spain; Fascist Dictator of Spain, since 1939.—42, 202, 224

FRANÇOIS-PONCET, ANDRÉ: French diplomatist; Ambassador to Germany, 1931-38; Ambassador to Rome, 1938-40.—223

FÜCHS, K.: Publisher of "Danziger Neuesten Nachrichten."—98, 182

FUNK, WALTHER: Major German war criminal; Secretary of State in Reich Ministry of National Economy; Head of the Reichsbank as successor to Dr. Schacht since 1939; sentenced by the International Military Tribunal to lifelong imprisonment in 1946.—163, 164

GARVIN, JAMES LOUIS: British journalist; Editor of the "Observer" since 1908; Editor-in-Chief of the "Encyclopaedia Britannica."—39

GEYR von SCHWEPPEBURG, LEO: Baron; Major-General; German Military Attaché in London, 1933-37.—178

GOEBBELS, PAUL JOSEPH: Major German war criminal; Minister for Propaganda in the Hitler government, 1933-45.—113, 114, 121, 182

GOERING, HERMANN: Major German war criminal; Commander of Military Air Corps and Minister for Air; Commissar for carrying out the "Four-Year Plan"; sentenced to death by the International Military Tribunal in 1946.—57, 72, 91, 144, 155, 175, 188

GRITZBACH, ERICH: German civil servant; Ministerialdirektor in Goering's department for carrying out the "Four-Year Plan."—57

HÁCHA, EMIL: President of the Czechoslovak Republic, since November, 1938; on March 15, 1939, signed the act liquidating Czechoslovakia's independence.—169

HAFERKORN: Professor.—99, 100, 182

HALIFAX, EDWARD: Viscount; British Secretary of State for War, 1935; Minister Without Portfolio (Lord Privy Seal), 1935-37; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1938-40.—27, 31-33, 52, 85, 111, 126-131, 141, 151-153, 155, 163, 166, 169-171, 176, 177, 180, 181

HAMILTON, Sir IAN: British General; during first imperialist war, commanded Mediterranean Expeditionary Force; Lord Rector of Edinburgh University, 1932-35; in 1938 went to Germany for negotiations with Hitler.—158

HELFFERICH, EMIL: Big German capitalist; before and during Hitler regime, Chairman of Hamburg-American Line and German-American Petroleum Co., a Standard Oil subsidiary; member of the council of the German division of the International Chamber of Commerce and of the executive committee of the Industrial and Trade Congress.—55, 56

HEMMING, FRANCIS: Secretary to the Spanish Non-Intervention Committee, 1936-39.—42

HENDERSON, Sir NEVILLE: British diplomatist; Ambassador to Germany, 1937-39.—151, 152, 171, 172, 211, 212

HENLEIN, KONRAD: Head of the Nazi party in the Sudeten region of Czechoslovakia originally known as the Sudetendeutsche Heimatfront and from 1935 as the Sudetendeutsche Partei; after the dismemberment of Czechoslovakia appointed Reichskommissar and later Reichsstatthalter of the Sudetenland.—20, 154

HERRIOT, EDOUARD: French Radical-Socialist; Prime Minister, 1924-25, 1926; again Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1932; President of the Chamber of Deputies, 1936-42.—209

HESSE, FRITZ: German diplomatist; Press Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, 1938-39.—60, 78, 79, 87, 100, 115, 165, 166

HEWEL: German diplomatist; Chief of the personal staff of the German Foreign Minister.—178

HOARE, Sir SAMUEL (now Lord Templewood): British Conservative; Secretary of State for India, 1931-35; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1935; First Lord of the Admiralty, 1936-37; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1937-39; Lord Privy Seal, 1939-40; Secretary of State for Air, 1940; Ambassador to Spain on special mission, 1940-44.—160, 161

HOHENLOHE, Princess: unofficial intermediary in the secret Anglo-German negotiations of 1938.—156

HORE-BELISHA, LESLIE: Parliamentary Secretary to the British Board of Trade, 1931-32; Financial Secretary to the Treasury, 1932-34; Minister of Transport, 1934-37; Secretary of State for War, 1937-40.—33

HUDSON, ROBERT SPEAR: British Conservative; in Diplomatic Service, 1911-23; Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Labour, 1931-35; Minister of Pensions, 1935-36; Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Health and Representative of the Office of Works in the House of Commons, 1936-37; Secretary Department of Overseas Trade, 1937-40; Minister of Agri-

culture and Fisheries, 1940-45.—54-57, 67-69, 71, 75, 77, 86, 87, 89, 90, 117, 119, 123, 130, 163, 181, 184, 185

IRONSIDE, Sir WILLIAM EDMUND: British General; Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Gibraltar, 1938-39; Inspector-General of Overseas Forces, 1939; Chief of the Imperial General Staff, 1939-40.—103, 174, 178

ISMAY, HASTINGS LIONEL: British General; Secretary of the Committee of Imperial Defence, since 1938; Additional Secretary (Military) of the War Cabinet, 1939-45; Chief of Staff to Minister of Defence, 1940-46.—100

KARLOWA RUDOLF: General Consul at the German Foreign Office.—175

KEMSLEY, JAMES: Baron; Big British capitalist; newspaper proprietor; "Sunday Times," "Sunday Chronicle," "Sunday Empire News."—113, 114

KENNEDY, AUBREY LEO: Diplomatic observer of the "Times."—100

KING-HALL, STEPHEN: British writer and journalist; Member of Labour Party until 1942; Editor and Proprietor of K-H Newsletter Service; Member of Parliament, 1939-45.—85, 86, 182

KORDT, THEODOR: German diplomatist; Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, 1938-39.—36-38, 41, 43, 46, 49-51, 53, 78, 105, 112, 115, 117, 119, 131, 177, 185, 186

LANDSDOWNE, HENRY: Marquis; Leader of Conservative Party; Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1900-05.—109

LEITH-ROSS, Sir FREDERICK: Chief Economic Adviser to the British Government since 1932; Director-General, Ministry of Economic Warfare, 1939-42.—164

LEY, ROBERT: Major German war criminal; Leader of German Labour Front.—158

MARKAU: Chairman of the Anglo-German Chamber of Commerce in London.—54, 55, 57

MEISSNER, OTTO: Chief Reich President's Office, 1919-34; Chief of the Reich Chancellor's Office since 1934.—157

MOORE, THOMAS: British Conservative Member of Parliament.—

100

MOTTISTONE, JOHN: Baron; Major-General; retired in 1922; Chairman of National Savings Committee, 1926-43.—178

MUSSOLINI, BENITO: Chief of the Italian Fascists; Premier and virtual dictator of Italy, 1922-43; executed by Italian patriots in 1945.—111, 114, 165

NEURATH, KONSTANTIN von: Major German war criminal; Minister of Foreign Affairs, 1932-38; Reichsprotector of Bohemia and Moravia, 1939-43; sentenced by International Military Tribunal to fifteen years' imprisonment.—157, 217

NICOLSON, HAROLD: son of eminent British diplomatist, Arthur Nicolson; writer on diplomatic history; Parliamentary Secretary to Ministry of Information, 1940-41.—209

NIEMÖLLER, MARTIN: German Protestant pastor; arrested by the Nazis in 1937.—27

NOEL-BUXTON, NOEL EDWARD: Baron; Prominent Member of the British Labour Party; Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries, 1924 and 1929-30.—100

OW-WACHENDORF, WERNER von: German diplomatist; Minister to Cairo, 1936-39.—204, 210, 211

PLYMOUTH, IVOR: Earl; Parliamentary Under Secretary of State at the British Foreign Office, 1936-39; President to the Spanish Non-Intervention Committee.—42

QUEENBOROUGH, ALMERIC: Baron; British company director of various commercial undertakings in the U.S.A.; Member of the Government Committee on Detention and Delay at Ports of Neutral Shipping.—100

RIBBENTROP, JOACHIM von: Major German war criminal; Ambassador to Great Britain, 1936-38; Reichsminister of Foreign Affairs from February 1938 to downfall of Hitler Germany; executed by sentence of the International Military Tribunal in 1946.—88, 136, 166

RIVERDALE, ARTHUR BALFOUR: Baron; Member of Anglo-Japanese Trade Relations Committee, 1937; Chairman of Government Committee on Industry and Trade.—55, 56

ROOSEVELT, FRANKLIN DELANO: President of the U.S.A., 1933-45.—179, 222

ROSENBERG, ALFRED: Major German war criminal; Director of the Foreign Office of Nazi Party; Editor-in-Chief of the "Völkischer Beobachter," 1919-38; Minister for Eastern Occupied Areas, 1941-44; executed by sentence of the International Military Tribunal in 1946.—113, 114

ROTHERMERE, HAROLD: head of a British newspaper trust; proprietor "Daily Mail"; Director of Press Relations at Ministry of Information, 1939.—15, 16, 19

RUNCIMAN, WALTER: Lord; National-Liberal Party; President of the British Board of Trade, 1931-37; Lord President of the Council, 1938-39; the head of the British Mission sent to Czechoslovakia in 1938.—57, 58, 156-158, 163, 177

RYDZ-SMIGLY, EDWARD: Marshal of Poland; successor to Pilsudski; Inspector-General of the Armed Forces, 1935-39.—80, 127

SANDYS, DUNCAN: (Winston Churchill's son-in-law) British Conservative and Member of Parliament; appointed to the Embassy in Berlin, 1930; in the Foreign Office, 1932-33; in 1933 retired from Diplomatic Service.—30, 33

SARGENT, Sir ORME GARTON: British diplomatist; Deputy Under Secretary of State at Foreign Office, 1933-39.—77, 78

SCHACHT, HJALMAR: Major German war criminal; President of the Reichsbank, 1923-30, and 1933-39.—58, 162, 223

SCHLITTER, OSCAR: Second Secretary at the German Embassy in London, 1937-39.—49

SCHUSCHNIGG, KURT von: Leader of the Austrian Christian Social Party; Chancellor of the Austrian Republic, 1934-38.—139

SELZAM, E.: Counsellor at the German Embassy in London, 1938-39.—52, 78

SIMON, Sir JOHN: National-Liberal Party; British Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1931-35; Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1935-37; Chancellor of the Exchequer, 1937-40.—36, 160

SMART, W. A.: British diplomatist; Oriental Counsellor in Cairo, 1929-46.—209

STANLEY, OLIVER FREDERICK: President of the Board of Trade, 1937-39; Secretary of State for War, 1940.—40, 163, 164, 166, 167, 169

STEWART, Sir FINDLATER: Director-General of British Ministry of Information, 1939.—165

STRANG, Sir WILLIAM: British diplomatist; Counsellor in Foreign Office; director of the Central Europe Department, 1938-39; June 14, 1939, came to Moscow for the Anglo-Franco Soviet talks.—52

STUMM, F.: German diplomatist and big industrialist.—202, 203

SWINTON, Sir PHILIP: Since 1935 Viscount Masham; British Secretary of State for the Colonies, 1931-35; Secretary of State for Air, 1935-38.—30, 33, 155

TILEA, VIOREL VIRGIL: Rumanian diplomatist; Minister to London, 1939-40.—172

VANSITTART, Sir ROBERT: British diplomatist; Permanent Under Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, 1930-38; Chief Diplomatic Adviser to Foreign Secretary, 1938-41.—202

WAECHTLER, FRITZ: National-Socialist District Leader for Bavaria since 1935; Hauptamtleiter in the Reich leadership of the Nazi party; Leader of the Nazi Teachers' Association.—113

WANGENHEIM, ALEXANDER von: Baron; Prussian landowner; member of the Nazi party; founder of the "Völkischer Beobachter"; member of the Reichstag; President of the Reich Association of Agricultural and Forestry Employers' Federations.—197

WEBER, WALTER: German diplomatist; Assistant Commercial Attaché in London, 1936-38; First Secretary at the German Embassy in London, 1939.—57

WEIZSÄCKER, ERNST: Baron von; German diplomatist; Director of Political Department of Foreign Office, 1936-38; Secretary of State at Foreign Office, 1938-43.—36, 45, 46, 58, 91, 92, 102, 105, 136, 144, 190, 191

WELCK, WOLFGANG von: German diplomatist; Second Secretary at the German Embassy in London, 1939.—115

WELCZEK, JOHANNES von: Count; German diplomatist; Ambassador to Spain, 1926-36; to France, 1936-39.—158, 190, 217, 225, 226, 232

WIEDEMANN, FRITZ: Captain; Adjutant of the Führer, 1935-39; General Consul in San Francisco, 1939-41.—155, 156

WIEHL, EMIL: Commissioner for Commercial Treaties at the German Foreign Office.—54-57, 163

WILSON, Sir ARNOLD: Acting Civil Commissioner and Political Resident in the Persian Gulf with Anglo-Persian Oil Company, Ltd., 1921-32; Chairman of Home Office Committee on Structural Precautions Against Air Attack, 1936-38; Editor "Nineteenth Century and After," 1934-38.—99, 100

WILSON, Sir HORACE: close collaborator of Neville Chamberlain; Chief Industrial Adviser to the British Government, 1930-39; Permanent Secretary of the Treasury and Head of the Civil Service, 1939-42; one of the few advisers of Chamberlain during his negotiations with Hitler in September 1938; in the summer of 1939 conducted in Chamberlain's name secret negotiations with the Germans for a broad Anglo-German agreement.—36, 37, 45, 46, 52, 67-72, 75, 77, 78, 89-92, 102, 104, 105, 112, 116-124, 148, 151, 156-159, 166, 177, 178, 180, 183-191

WINTERTON, EDWARD: Earl; British Minister Without Portfolio (Chancellor of Duchy of Lancaster), 1937-39; Under Secretary of State for Air, 1938; Under Secretary of State for Home Affairs, 1938; Postmaster-General, 1939.—30, 33, 155

WOERMANN, ERNST: German diplomatist; Director of Political Department and Under Secretary of State at Foreign Office, 1938-43.—20, 25

WOHLTHAT, HELMUTH: Official for special assignments with rank of Ministerialdirektor in Goering's department for the carrying out of the "Four-Year Plan."—67-72, 74, 75, 77, 78, 86, 88-92, 102, 105, 117, 119, 120, 122-124, 130, 144, 147, 167, 178, 181, 183-189, 191

